

The Atlantic

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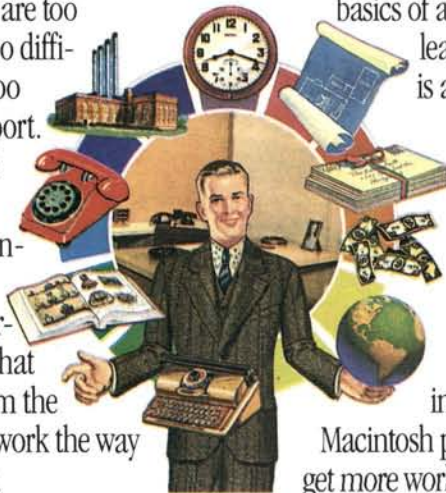
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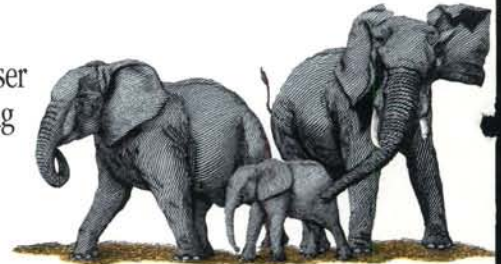
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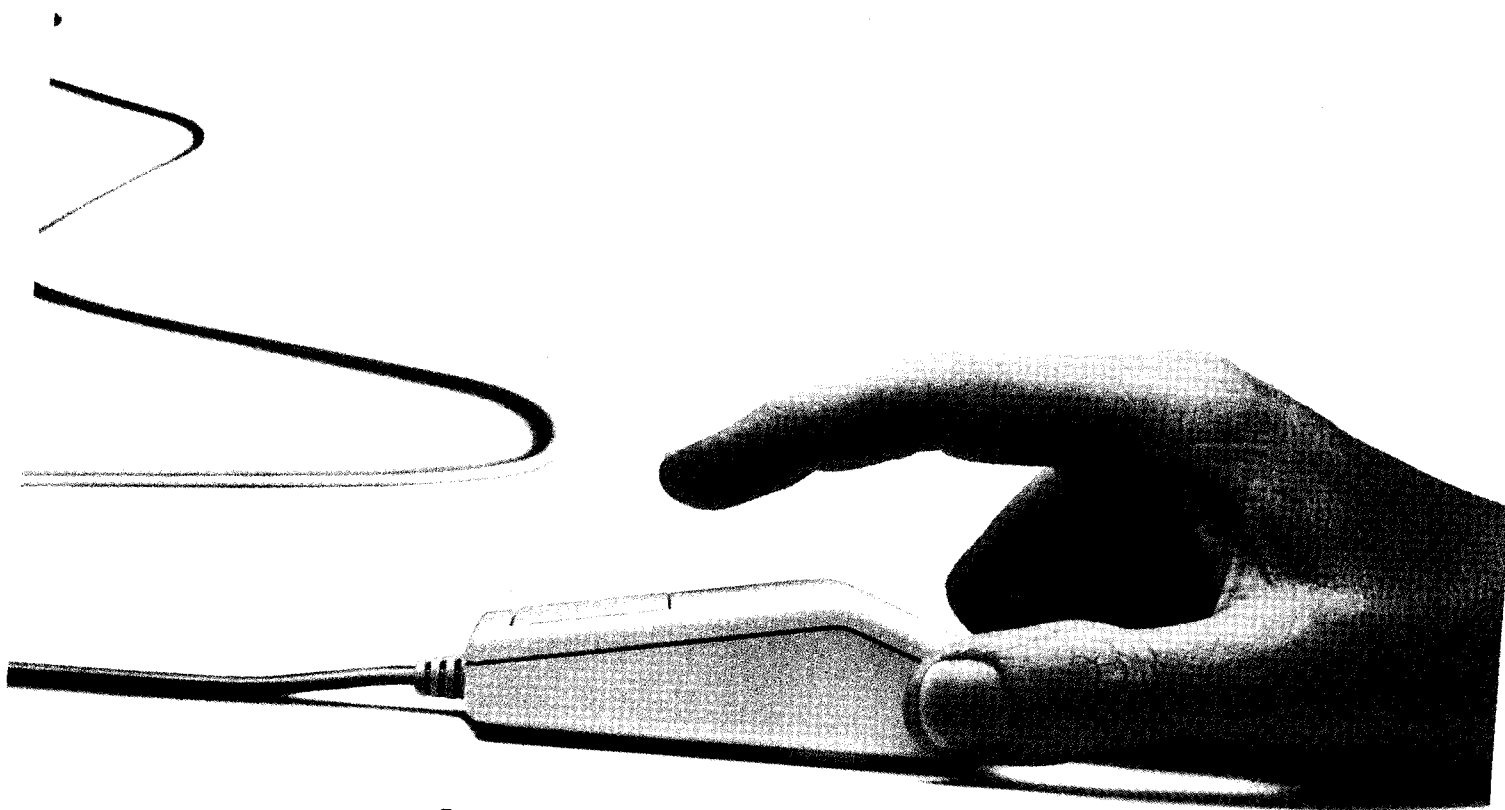
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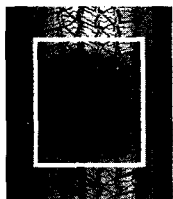
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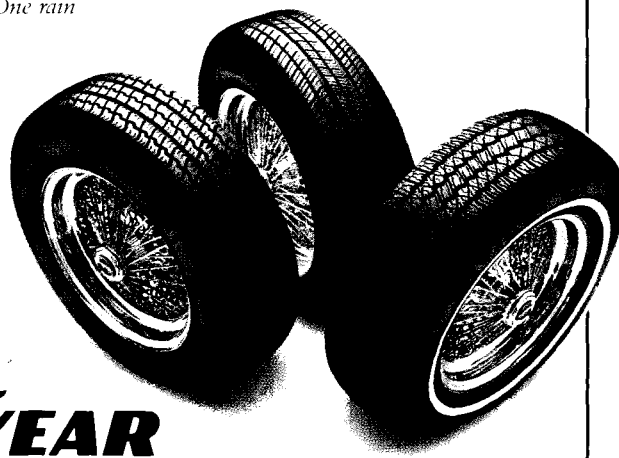


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745 BOYLSTON STREET

WILFRID MELLERS, THE author of our article this month on the Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe, first met Sculthorpe when they were both studying music at Oxford, in the 1950s. Mellers, fifteen years Sculthorpe's senior, was already an established music scholar. But the two men had much in common. Sculthorpe was interested in aboriginal music and how it could be incorporated into the Western forms he knew. Mellers had begun to explore, as he says, "the impact of primitive cultures on the modern world," and was using Native American musical themes in his compositions.

In the sixties Mellers founded the music department at the University of York, introducing world music into the curriculum and challenging students to bring every part of their experience and education to the study of music. He was also the first scholar to devote attention to the Beatles, giving a series of lectures on them which became a book. He had teenage daughters at the height of the group's popularity: "At first I couldn't escape their music," Mellers says. "Then I found I was interested in it."

While publishing influential books on Bach and Beethoven, Mellers continued to follow popular music. Literary sources for music have been his chief fascination: as a successful composer, he set to music many poems by William

Blake, his favorite poet; work by other English poets, mostly of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and also much American poetry of this century, continuing his lifetime fascination with American writers. "I reckon I've got one of the finest libraries of American literature owned by an Englishman," Mellers says.

In the seventies he became intrigued by Bob Dylan, and published a long essay about him, "A Darker Shade of Pale," in 1984. He thought that he would write a complementary book about Joni Mitchell, whose lyrics similarly interested him, but he eventually expanded the book, *Angels of the Night*, to include many American jazz, folk, and pop singers. It goes on to "tough creatures" like Grace Jones and Joan Armatrading, and ends with reflections on Rickie Lee Jones and Laurie Anderson.

Mellers has written three books since he retired, in 1981. He has just finished a book on the Australian composer Percy Grainger, who at the beginning of the century "dabbled in folk music"—notating ethnic and folk music in England, recording the improvised polyphony of Polynesians in New Zealand, and otherwise doing "all these things now regarded as the right things to do." Next spring Mellers, now seventy-seven, will return to teaching, offering a course at York on Grainger.

—THE EDITORS

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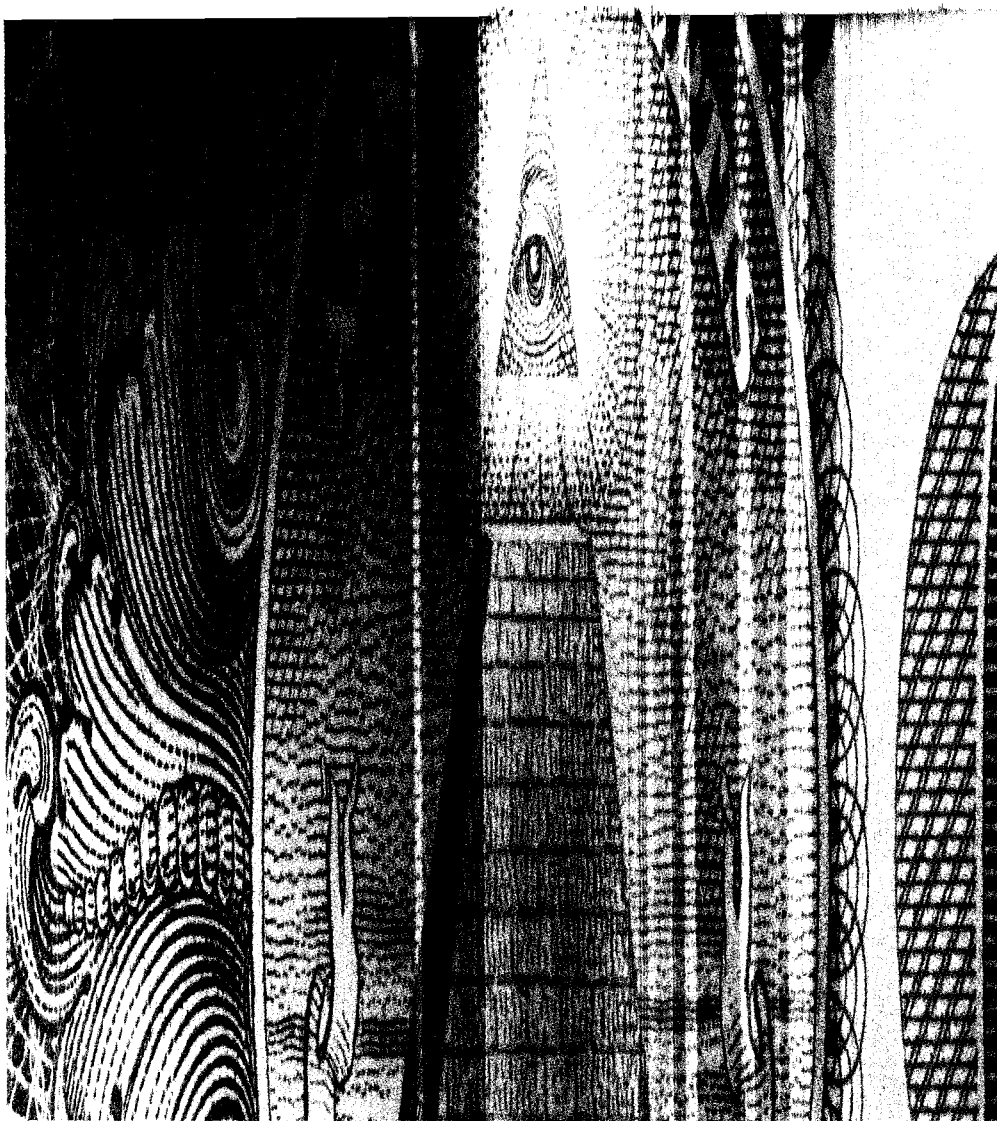
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The August Almanac was compiled with the assistance of Gail Cleere, on behalf of the U.S. Naval Observatory; Gregory Budney, of Cornell University; and Don Kroodsmas, of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.



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convinced that his opinion is correct, in perpetuity. Of course, when all is said and done, many prefer a blended Scotch like Ballantine's Finest.

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Can you detect the subtle fragrance of heather?

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



CAN POETRY MATTER?

Thank you for publishing Dana Gioia's article ("Can Poetry Matter?" May *Atlantic*). May I suggest that you invite a woman poet, preferably one older than Gioia, to address the same subject? You would gain, I suspect, a broader view. I doubt that she would so categorically denounce the present and romanticize the period thirty years ago. I doubt, too, that she would extol the earlier period because a handful of male poets kept poetry "a part of the mainstream of artistic and intellectual life." This assertion sounds all too much like the U.S. Marines' slogan, "A Few Good Men."

Gioia's view is selective. Here are two major omissions. How would a South or Central American poet take Gioia's opening sentence, "American poetry now belongs to a subculture"? That's North American poetry. If anything might be cited as a major injection of health into North American poetry since the era Gioia celebrates, it is the poetry of South and Central America. Helping to nurture this growth have been North American poets active in translation, who often include their translations in their readings, even on college campuses, even sponsored by creative-writing programs, the bane of Gioia's romantic, patriarchal, Eurocentric, and elitist view.

Surely Gioia is aware of this transfusion from the south. He also knows how few North American women poets were hailed during his supposedly better era, and that only since then have North American women poets been recognized in any number. These accomplished and innovating women poets have enriched North American poetry well beyond the parameters of Gioia's chosen period. Given this omission, the chastising of Adrienne Rich, of all people, for "her often overbearing polemics" is irksome.

PETER SEARS
Albany, Oreg.

As I was saying just the other day to my colleagues, at their leisure in the faculty lounge, we are all here (and not at the local brick factory, working forty hours a week) specifically because our society can afford for us to be here. If we were needed elsewhere, we'd be elsewhere. Although the remark offended friend and foe alike, I don't think I was far off the mark.

English departments, it seems to me, should revamp curricula and goals in a most thorough way while they still can. But I see very little internal drive to do so. When the U.S. economy really hits the skids, the taxpayers will most likely close down every English department in the land, and they will wonder at the third-rate, homegrown, ingrown, sinecured Ceausescus who have lived so well so long while doing so little for the public weal. But by then that closing-down will be too late to do us any good as a people. By that time "poets-in-residence" and other fiction types will be scrambling to find a cardboard box to sleep in or a bridge to sleep under. And they will still be bemoaning, no doubt, the materialistic crassness of a culture that refused them Full Mandarin Wealth, still considering themselves superior—to the very ends of their fingertips—to the man who owns the brick factory and to the women and men who do the manual labor at the brick factory.

NEDRA MCCLOUD
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas

Dana Gioia raises questions that have troubled American poets since Whitman, but Gioia's own evidence indicates that hundreds of thousands of Americans attend poetry readings every year, as well as classes taught by thousands of poets in the university "subculture"—which somehow suggests to him a dying art. My own evidence, as director of a major creative-writing program, indicates that for every young poet we admit to

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the MFA program, at least ten others present themselves unsuccessfully for admission—and I am not persuaded that all these young people are suffering from delusions. Nor is it a burden on my conscience to contemplate the numbers of quite normal Americans who want to study poetry in the academic setting where I am happy to make my living. American poetry has always found a very proper home in the American university, where the great audiences Whitman wrote about can be brought up.

MICHAEL HEFFERNAN
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Ark.

Dana Gioia doesn't say so, but the "poetry" he's complaining about must be the stuff that doesn't rhyme. Otherwise he wouldn't omit rap artists and cowboy poets from the discussion and then demand restoration of "a vulgar vitality to poetry," so as to save it from lit critters grazing in the groves of academe. Rap artists and cowboy poets are plenty vulgar, even in Gioia's sense of the word. Look at the size of the ur-

ban black and rural white populations they address. Look at the concerns they explore.

Indeed, those whom Gioia would (I suspect) dismiss as poetasters have already implemented at least two thirds of his "modest proposals" for making poetry public. He should turn on that radio of his. I'd lay even money that most Americans who know of Millay's "The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver" were informed through Johnny Cash's recitation of it on network television.

Intentionally or not, many of our universities preach that things that are popular cannot therefore be good. And intentionally or not, Gioia endorses the assumption.

WILLIAM W. SAVAGE, JR.
The University of Oklahoma
Norman, Okla.

I was dismayed to find the effective concluding paragraph of Dana Gioia's essay marred by a misspelling of *desiccated*.

L. S. DEUTSCH
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, N.C.

Dana Gioia replies:

The letters printed above often take exception to things I did not actually write. I never, for example, said that poetry is a "dying art." Rather, I maintained that poetry is thriving in a subculture that is unfortunately cut off from public intellectual life. Similarly, I never pretended to discuss the overall state of poetry in North, Central, and South America, as the disingenuous Peter Sears suggests—only its paradoxical position in these United States. And my supposed "chastising" of Adrienne Rich consisted of one qualification made while declaring her a "major poet by any standard."

Nowhere did I call for the abolition of writing programs. For better and worse, these programs are now a permanent part of contemporary American cultural life. What I did do was point out a few systemic problems caused by poetry's sequestration in educational institutions—the need to publish for reasons of professional validation, the temptation to turn anthologies into academic directories, the decline of candid reviewing in a tightly

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Hamlet



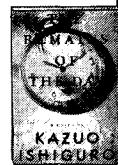
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knit world, and the general tendency to focus inward on one's own specialty rather than outward on the broader culture. To reform these practices does not threaten academic intellectual life. Perhaps the university does have the ability to create the "great audiences" that Whitman (and Michael Heffernan) dreamed of, but in its present form it is unlikely to realize this grand vision.

If I praised the integrity and courage of poet-critics and bohemian literati of fifty years ago (not thirty, as Mr. Sears misremembers), it was as an example of what was lost in our culture when writers changed from being intellectual free agents to being institutional employees. I myself pointed out the danger of forgetting the deprivations they suffered. "Only a philistine," I wrote, "would romanticize the blissfully banished artistic poverty of yesteryear." But it is equally dangerous to dismiss this generation's immense artistic and intellectual contributions because they lacked adequate dental plans and retirement benefits. That is merely a different kind of philistinism.

Finally, I share Mr. Savage's delight in the vitality of rap music and cowboy poetry. These phenomena demonstrate the continuing appeal of verse as a popular medium. While mainstream literary opinion denounced rhyme and meter as defunct, anti-democratic, Eurocentric, and elitist, working-class and poor Americans were busy using these discredited techniques to portray their everyday lives. The instructive irony of this situation gives one more example—as if any more were needed—of how remote contemporary literary theory has become from the common person's experience of literature.

PUT CONCRETELY

When I returned from the 1991 spring convention of the American Concrete Institute, in Boston, I found on my desk your April issue, containing John Sedgwick's eleven-page article on concrete, "Strong but Sensitive." It was painful, to say the least, to find that Sedgwick failed to mention the American Concrete Insti-

tute at all, and referred to the American Society of Civil Engineers as "the organization that comes closest to treating concrete in an academic fashion."

Founded in 1906, the ACI has grown to be an international association with close to 21,000 members, including nearly 3,000 from countries outside North America. We publish scholarly journals, sponsor training programs, promote research, and make major contributions to code writing and standardization processes in the United States. If ACI standards and recommendations were followed more carefully, the durability and quality of concrete would be assured. As Horace Greeley once said, "Concrete rightly made will last a thousand years."

MARY K. HURD
Member, Board of Direction
American Concrete Institute
Farmington Hills, Mich.

With a suitcase full of papers from the American Concrete Institute's spring convention, I went to the magazine shop at Logan Airport for



69. Explore Western art, from the ins of Greece to the postmodernists. 0 illustrations. Hardcover: \$35 QPB: \$15.95



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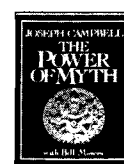
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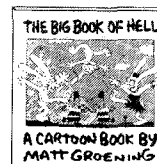
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more-entertaining reading for my flight back to England. My friend recommended *The Atlantic*, which I bought. Imagine my horror when, settling back for the flight, I opened to "Strong but Sensitive"—on the U.S.A.'s crumbling concrete infrastructure!

The article lists a number of deterioration processes affecting concrete structures. From a worldwide perspective, by far the most widespread and costly of these processes is corrosion of the steel that is used to reinforce virtually all concrete structures. The Romans built using structural elements that did not require reinforcement. With conventional technology it would be difficult, if not impossible, to design a reinforced-concrete structure with any hope of its surviving for as long as the Pantheon. For longer service lives there are two possible approaches. We can go back to the Roman approach, and build using domes and unreinforced columns of very large cross-section. Or, more practically, we must develop methods of protecting reinforcing steel from corrosion. Epoxy-coated reinforcement and cathodic protection were mentioned in the article. At Imperial College we are pursuing a different approach, developing chemical admixtures that are added at the time of mixing to modify the pore structure of the concrete so that it is far less easily penetrated by the molecular species initiating and sustaining reinforcement corrosion.

Sedgwick cites the American Society of Civil Engineers as being "the organization that comes closest to treating concrete in an academic fashion." I disagree. We have been running a masters' course in concrete structures and technology at Imperial College for the past forty-five years; in this time more than 1,400 students have graduated. We have been doing research in concrete over the same period, and around a hundred concrete-related Ph.D.s have been awarded to our students. For the past three years we have been running an intensive six-week advanced concrete-technology course to provide the revision, updating, and further understanding of concrete technology necessary for experienced concrete technologists to become recognized in this field. Hence our concrete specialists do not have to "train themselves, designing their own programs of chemistry, physics, materials

science, and civil engineering." We have had participants in the course come from all over the world, but not yet from the United States. Perhaps now is the time!

NICK BUENFELD
*Imperial College of Science, Technology,
and Medicine
London, England*

Since my professional field is concrete, I was pleased that you chose to publish John Sedgwick's article. It included a number of errors, however.

The pervasive error is the implication that all concrete is alike and that it is "susceptible to the elements," which results "in a literally crumbling infrastructure." The concrete that has deteriorated has done so because those who specified what it should be failed to include some critical requirement such as frost resistance or sulfate resistance, or because those who executed the work failed to comply with the specifications.

Some smaller errors: "Because of the nature of the chemical bond . . ." No proof of any chemical bond in cement hydration products has been presented. "In the past ten years . . . 40,000 pounds per square inch has been achieved. . . ." A strength of 40,000 psi was achieved in the laboratory at least as far back as 1930.

Sedgwick says that "water bonds with the cement"; it doesn't. He says, almost correctly, "the cement and water combine into calcium and silicate hydrates." The product is "calcium silicate hydrates."

We are told that "all concrete is tested at the site for strength and wateriness." The term "wateriness" is one that has, I believe, never been used in connection with concrete. I assume that what is meant is "slump," which has sometimes been said to be a measure of wetness. Since the slump (or wetness) can be doubled by use of a high-range water-reducing admixture (HRWR, the correct term for the slang term "superplasticizers," which Sedgwick uses), it seems incorrect to say "wateriness."

This article has a great deal of good, useful, accurate information. It sure is a shame the goofs weren't removed.

BRYANT MATHER
*Structures Laboratory
Department of the Army
Vicksburg, Miss.*

John Sedgwick replies:

I was surprised to be taken to task by Mary K. Hurd for not mentioning the American Concrete Institute, for in my last encounter with the ACI, one of its engineers refused to allow me to quote from my interview with him. At his insistence I withdrew his name from the story, and with it any reference to the ACI. I had not intended my comments about the academic value of the American Society of Civil Engineers' canoe race to be taken too strictly, but I'm still not persuaded that the ACI does much more than the ASCE to teach concrete as an academic subject. Ms. Hurd should take note of Nick Buenfeld's letter about the masters' course in concrete structures and technology at the Imperial College of Science, Technology, and Medicine. That certainly does "treat concrete in an academic fashion." I only wish that Dr. Buenfeld had seen that I referred exclusively to the United States: Europe and Japan both run far ahead of the United States in teaching concrete.

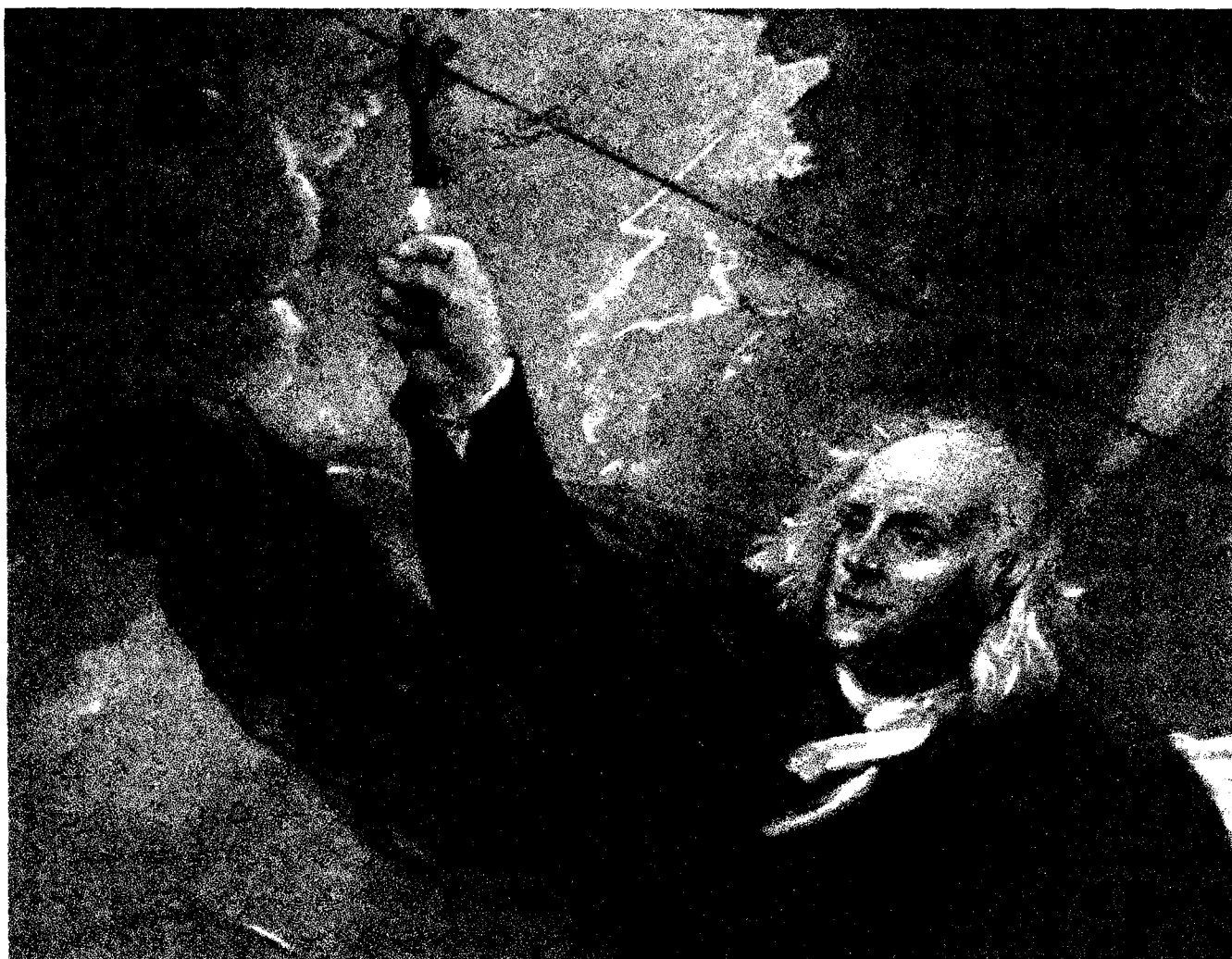
I am honored that Bryant Mather found it worthwhile to scrutinize my article so carefully. Yes, the correct term is "calcium silicate hydrates." And although water does bond with the cement in the hydration process, it does not do so chemically, as Mr. Mather notes.

Surely, however, Mr. Mather is nit-picking to criticize my use of the word "wateriness." Am I obliged to use concrete-industry jargon when the English language will suffice? As for "superplasticizer," it may be slang, but it is a universally used term in the concrete business.

If 40,000-pounds-per-square-inch concrete was indeed achieved in a laboratory back in the thirties, that is news to all the concrete specialists I consulted. Perhaps Mr. Mather can cite where and when this event occurred, and why nothing came of it.

As for his larger point, that concrete is not "susceptible to the elements": as I pointed out in my article, concrete by nature cracks practically as soon as it is laid down, exposing the material to all sorts of chemical and environmental hazards. Chemical admixtures that I described (and that Dr. Buenfeld mentions) have been developed to minimize the destruction, but they have not been able to eliminate it entirely.

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Q&A

Do birds have accents?

Most songbirds do. Ornithologists, like linguists, speak of "dialects," and in fact songbirds acquire dialects in much the same way people do—by listening to the sounds made by others of their kind and by practicing until they can accurately reproduce what they've heard. Hence regional distinctions, expressed as variations in pitch and timing, tend to be perpetuated. The differences can be subtle or striking, and dialects can be intensely localized or can prevail over a broad geographic swath. The melody sung by bobolinks in one field may be slightly different from the one sung mere miles away, while winter wrens west of the Rockies sing the same tune as their eastern brethren, though at a much faster tempo. As for species that appear not to develop dialects, biologists believe that the songs of some of these birds are genetically programmed, not learned.

HEALTH & SAFETY

August 31, the beginning of the football season for NCAA Division One teams. The College Football Association, an advocacy group, recently surveyed present and past NCAA football teams at nine colleges and found that since 1949 the size of the average lineman has grown from 72.6 inches and 195 pounds to 75.3 inches and 253 pounds. The average back has grown from 70.9 inches and 177 pounds to 73.2 inches and 201 pounds. The CFA attributes these increases to

more weight training and a better diet; many experts also implicate steroids. Under new NCAA regulations, every August college football teams must submit a team roster to the NCAA, which then randomly chooses a slate of 36 players who at some point during the year will be given 48 hours to show up to be tested for steroids. If any test positive, they suffer a year's suspension. "With the increased testing," says Dr. Carl Maresh, a sports specialist at the University of Connecticut, "I would not be surprised to see weights come down over the next couple of years." If the 862 present-day backs and linemen on the nine NCAA teams surveyed were replaced with 862 players of 1949 size, the reduction in total weight would be some 33,780 pounds.



GOVERNMENT

August 5, Congress recesses until September 10. For the House, this is the longest of the year's five "district work periods." Many congressmen this year will be trading vacation time for an unusually rigorous schedule of appearances before their constituents. One reason: nervousness about the anti-incumbent sentiment among the nation's voters. Another: the decennial process of redistricting. Congressmen from districts that are being redrawn face the need to become familiar with new pieces of geography—and the voters who live in them. In the 13 states scheduled to give up one or more seats in the House through reapportionment, more than a score of incumbents will find themselves out of a district, facing election contests against other incumbents if they seek to retain office.



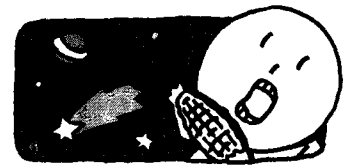
ENVIRONMENT

Divers and snorkelers are arriving in Florida in great numbers right now, a prime time for visiting the coral reefs of the Florida Keys. Sadly, there is less and less to see. Coral-reef scientists are worried by a sharp increase throughout the tropics in coral bleaching, which occurs when the coral animals lose the symbiotic unicellular algae that live within their otherwise transparent bodies and give them color (as well as oxygen and food). The bleached coral polyps are not necessarily dead but are severely weakened. Since bleaching often coincides with abnormally high water temperatures, many researchers fear that coral reefs worldwide may be threatened if global warming becomes a reality. Others are more inclined to blame the bleaching on other environmental stresses—pollution, sedimentation, even careless tourists.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Mattress sales are at their peak this month, owing in part to the beginning of the new school year. College students moving into apartments and parents of primary- and secondary-school students who have moved their families during the summertime to avoid uprooting them in the middle of the academic year make up the lion's share of individual new-mattress purchasers; bulk orders also come in August from colleges and boarding schools. Because about 75 percent of all used bedding is passed along

to another person, the average mattress in use in the United States tends to be past its prime—more than 11 years old. Although sales of conventional mattresses declined slightly in 1990, futons—a cheap and adaptable form of Japanese bedding that caught on here 15 years ago—are selling briskly, especially in big cities and college towns: one more sign of a national accommodation to less money and less space.

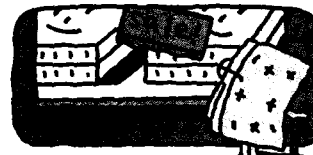
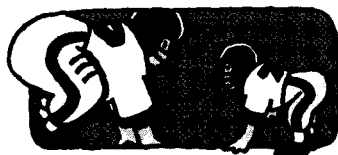


THE SKIES

August 9, New Moon. 12–13, after moonset, watch for the Perseid meteor shower, one of the year's most brilliant and reliable. Pieces of a comet last seen during the Civil War, the Perseids generally produce 40 to 50 bright shooting stars an hour. 25, Full Moon, also known this month as the Corn or Grain Moon. The Algonquin Indians called this the Sturgeon Moon. The Cheyenne called it the Moon When the Cherries Are Ripe.

50 YEARS AGO

James Marshall, writing in the August, 1941, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "We are living in a world in which culture has, for the most part, become destructive, in which destructive forces and negative values that had for a long time been repressed, here by force and there by slogans, have escaped. They will not be tamed by divisive doctrines of race or of mysterious Orientals. They will not be quieted by tolerance, for I believe that minority groups have suffered almost as much from tolerance as from intolerance, for tolerance itself in psychological terms is a mere suppression of animosity rather than an acceptance of differences."



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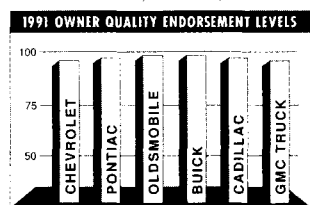
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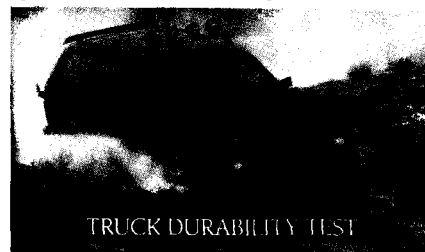
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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

Military Efficiency

Reflections on the one government institution that adheres to the notion of a common good

SOME PEOPLE study Latin to defend the faith. I studied to defend the country. That was the official story, at least. After the launch of *Sputnik*, in 1957, and the flurry of books with titles like *Why Ivan Can Read Better Than Johnny*, American schools were given the job of helping the nation catch up with the mighty USSR. Money poured in to school districts under the National Defense Education Act. When it reached my school district, some of the money went for German and Latin courses for students in junior high. If anyone had been able to anticipate future Dan Quayle jokes, we could have rationalized that we were working through *amo, amas* to be ready for action in Latin America. *Semper paratus*.

At the time national defense seemed to be a strange rationale for learning a dead language. In retrospect the reasoning seems inevitable. I am beginning to think that the only way the national government can do anything worthwhile is to invent a security threat and turn the job over to the military. This is not a conclusion I leap to with glee. But I wonder if any other conclusion makes sense.

The American military's most celebrated social success is opening opportunities regardless of race. This

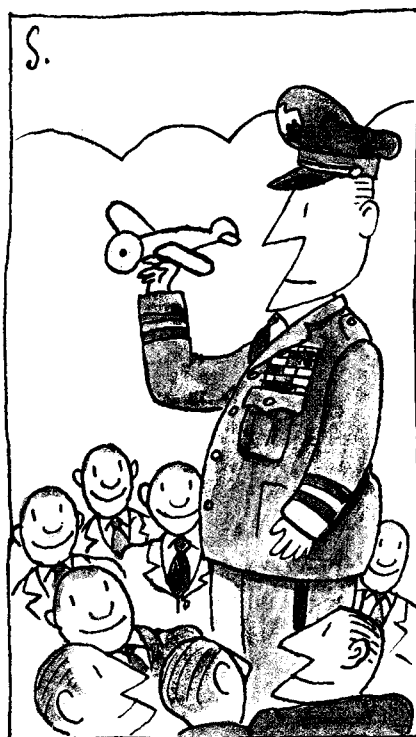
achievement differs from, say, promoting language instruction, in that the military addressed the question of race head-on rather than disguising it as a security threat. Still, it is significant that the military has coped with America's worst problem more thoroughly than any other large institution has. As a matter of democratic theory, it is bad for the Army, whose members may die to defend the whole nation, to have twice as high a proportion of blacks (or any other group) as the nation does—just as it is bad for the Senate, which makes laws for the whole nation, to include no blacks at all. But a modern army spends very little of its time dying. For most of its members service is less a sacrifice than an opportunity. The high rates of black enlistment, retention, and promotion reflect the fact

that the military has become more open to ability regardless of background than have most businesses.

Another example, with more of a history, concerns industry. Long before it dreamed of integrating its ranks, the military was fostering infant American technologies. In the 1790s the newborn United States had no industrial base to speak of, and Eli Whitney, the inventor of the cotton gin, had watched his business fail. Ten years later, on the strength of an order from the Army for 10,000 muskets, Whitney had recovered—and had developed America's first mass-production system, including some of the world's first machine tools. As the historian Geoffrey Perrett has written, "Far from being left behind by the Industrial Revolution the United States, in a single decade and thanks largely to one man, had suddenly burst into the front rank."

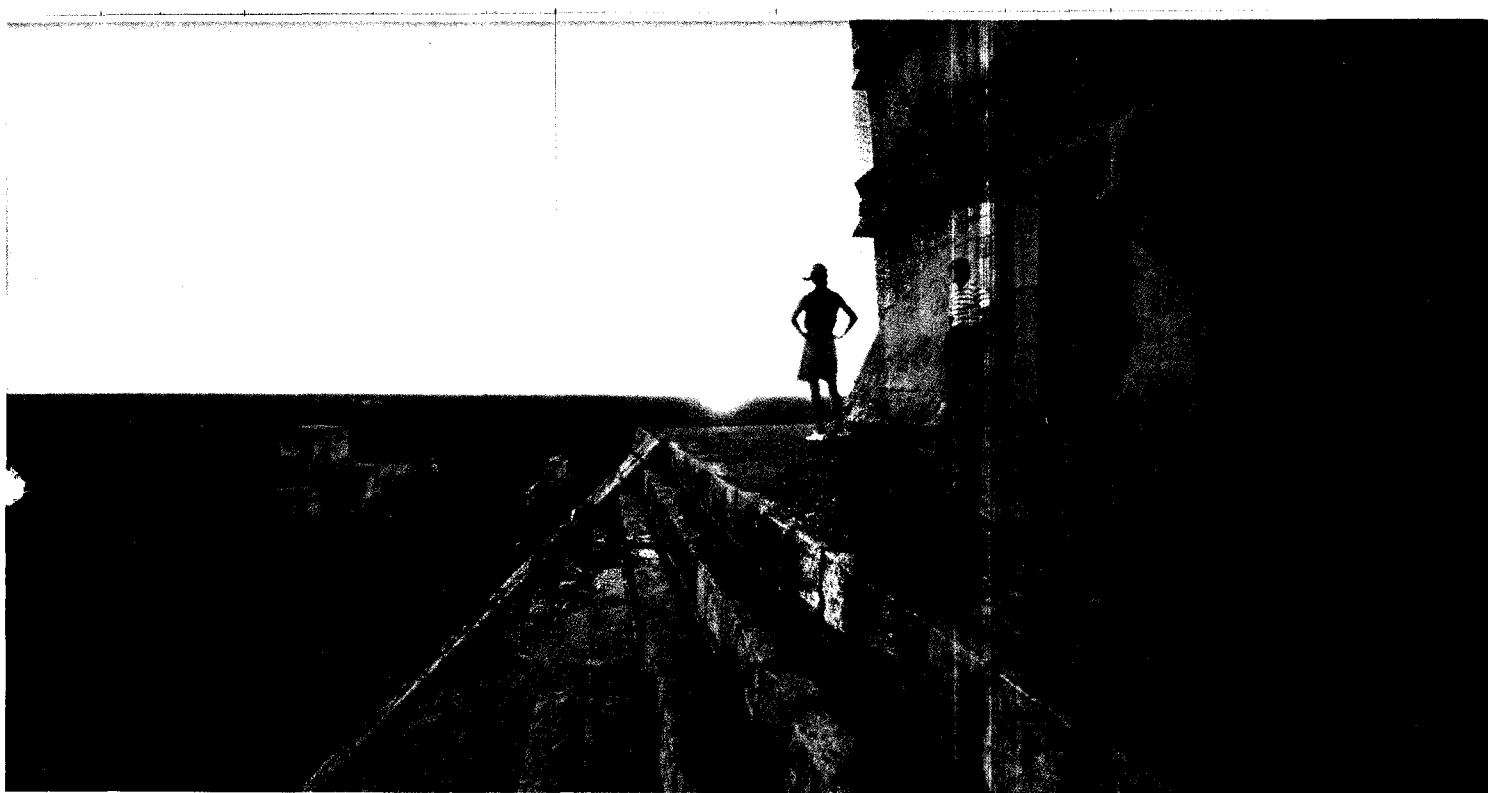
IN HIS BOOK *A Country Made by War*, Perrett presented a long list of events about which everyone now says, "That was good for the country," but which came to pass only because it could be claimed at the time that "this will be good for the military." Settlers moving west followed maps drawn by Army cartographers, along roads built by Army engineers and guarded by Army forts. The rocks, plant samples, landscape drawings, and weather readings that made the Smithsonian a leading scientific institution were sent back by the Corps of Topographical Engineers.

Some of the beneficial consequences have been unintended spin-offs, of the sort epitomized by Tang, the powdered breakfast drink that was developed for astronauts. The Navy's search for ways to build bigger, stron-



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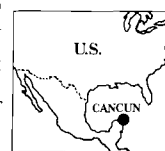


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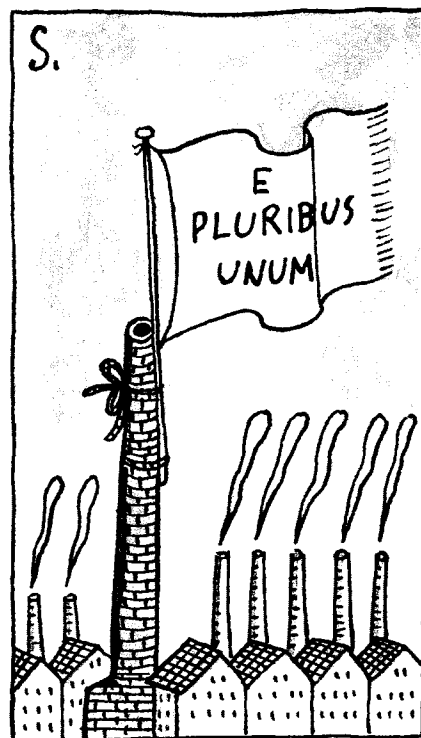
The Caribbean island of legendary pleasures

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ger warships in the half century before the Second World War helped foster the world's most advanced steel industry. But at other times politicians have deliberately chosen the military as a tool for jobs that could otherwise not, or not as easily, be done. Thomas Jefferson, as president, worried that the young republic was not training enough engineers. Although skeptical of the military, he expanded West Point, and made an engineer its superintendent. "This was his best chance to reform higher education: an institution that would teach modern languages, not dead ones, offering instruction in technology, not theology," Perrett wrote. "For more than half a century, West Point pioneered in the modernization of American education."

Economists still argue about whether efforts to guide and foster industry could, in principle, ever succeed in the United States. In two hundred years of application the military's guiding efforts have succeeded and failed in ways very similar to the guiding efforts of industrial policies elsewhere in the world. The failures are those that economic theory predicts: military-contract prices are high; when selecting future technologies, planners often pick "losers" (the B-1 bomber) rather than "winners" (super-silent submarines); firms grow fat and unfit when sheltered from the bracing need to compete with the wide world. "You Americans really want us to get into the arms business?" a Japanese auto executive asked me several years ago in Nagoya, although I had suggested no such thing. "You have seen how our car industry works. How long do you think your industries would remain competitive selling missiles and tanks?" But the military's industrial policy also succeeds, in the way that France's or Japan's does. The United States has strong aircraft and satellite industries partly because the military has for decades subsidized research, collaborated with industrial managers, applied buy-American policies, and not left big decisions to the invisible hand.

Even to suggest that the military should be a model for America is to realize all the reasons it shouldn't be. Not many women have reason to be enthusiastic about the opportunity of military careers. Despite efforts to diminish it, there is still a sense of class division between officers and enlisted



men that mirrors, rather than corrects, the division between the professional class and the working class in civilian life. Since the era of John Kennedy and his scholar-general, Maxwell Taylor, ambitious officers have known that they need extra schooling to get ahead. This has mainly led to a meaningless credentials race, run by officers who compete with stints at business schools or in systems-analysis courses. And of course America's overall strategy of putting military interests ahead of commercial ones has handicapped U.S. industries in a variety of ways, including the Cold War prohibition on sales of computers to countries in the Soviet bloc.

Still, what other part of the U.S. government can shamelessly say, as the Department of Defense routinely does in its reports, that America needs to have certain technical capacities within its borders, and meet certain educational and moral standards, in order to hold its place in the world? When the Department of Commerce says something similar, it quickly gets embroiled in technical economic arguments about the "comparative advantage" of various industries. When the Department of Education does, it's ignored. According to our economic and political theories, most agencies of the government have no special standing to speak about the general national welfare. Each represents a certain con-

stituency; the interest groups fight it out. The military, strangely, is the one government institution that has been assigned the legitimacy to act on its notion of the collective good. "National defense" can make us do things—train engineers, build highways—that the long-term good of the nation or common sense cannot.

We can respond to this fact in either of two ways. One is to say, "So be it," and use the indirect, blunt instrument of the military to promote the common welfare. In the 1940s we created a National System of Interstate and Defense Highways; perhaps in the 1990s we'll set up a National Defense Early Childhood Education Program. This approach would mean viewing DARPA—the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency—as America's natural and sufficient counterweight to MITI and the European technology bureaus. These ministries in other countries have several functions: they support basic research, coordinate work among their nation's companies, and provide a sheltered market for important new technologies. Economists say that all these functions are dangerous, but DARPA does every one. Craig Fields, a former director of DARPA, says that there are very few commercially important technologies that DARPA is not now supporting for purposes of defense. Pietro Nivola, of the Brookings Institution, recently published a paper saying that it's pointless even to argue about industrial policy, because the Pentagon is already doing most of what the U.S. government could ever do to help high-tech businesses. The Pentagon's Office of Industrial Base Assessment released a report last year, comparing the areas of emerging technology that the Department of Commerce thinks important with the ones that matter most for national defense. Even though a very few areas have military-only applications—so far no commercial market has emerged for "hypervelocity projectiles"—the most important areas overlap.

Socially, the so-be-it philosophy would mean making the military a showcase of multiracial, cross-class opportunity. It could be to the rest of America what America has long been to Europe—an arena where old snobberies matter less and where ambitious people can get ahead.

Or we could reach a different con-

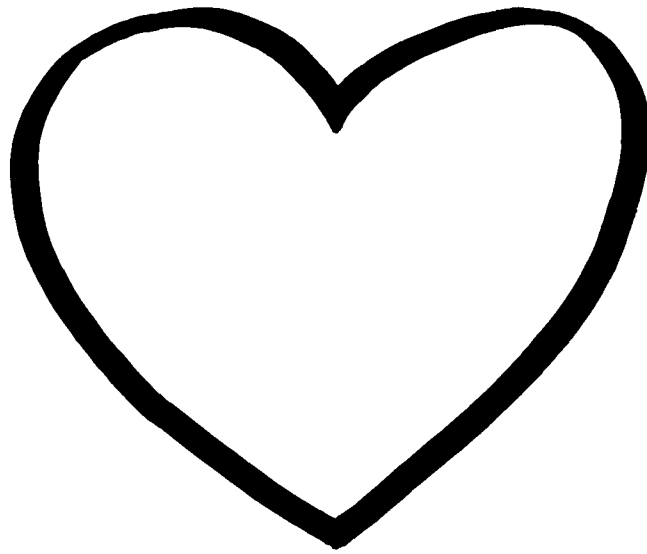


clusion. We could say that beefing up the military's role is too indirect a route, and that improving America's economy requires less militarism in general. The trick then is to learn from the good things the military does and try to apply the lessons elsewhere. For instance, schools in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore are effective because they make their worst students so good. The U.S. military has to do more or less the same thing. Although its admission standards have become more selective in the past ten years, the Army is not Harvard Medical School. It must make sure that high school graduates can keep Patriots ready and F-15s in the air. American industry faces the challenge of making average workers as competent as those in Japan—and although the military is spared many of the problems that affect American schools, it might help show us how to respond.

The military is also the largest institution in America that has a franchise to think about the success of people working in groups. An individual soldier's welfare matters, of course, but chiefly because it allows his platoon or company or brigade to cohere. The Secretary of Education and the fifty superintendents of state school systems preside over district-by-district rivalries that make it impossible to send help to the neediest schools. General Schwarzkopf could tell the Marines not to go ashore at Kuwait City, could tell the 101st Airborne that it had to fight alongside the French, and could make tens of thousands of people do what they did not want to do, in order to make the whole operation a success. At a common-sense level, we all recognize that individuals' rights must sometimes be limited for the good of all. Drivers have to follow rules; parents have obligations, not "rights," in regard to their children. But the U.S. military is about the only public institution that is comfortable saying openly that individual rights take second place to the welfare of the whole.

The military model must be applied with caution to a civilian society based on the pursuit of happiness and "Don't tread on me." But reflecting on the military could give politicians something they now lack: a language with which to discuss the common good. *E pluribus unum*, they might say.

—James Fallows



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Well-wishers greeting Nelson Mandela during his visit to Boston, 1990: a good cause, a misunderstood country

SOUTH AFRICA

Odium Africanum

Why it's hard for Americans to see apartheid whole, and without the distorting shadow cast by our racial history

WHAT WOULD WE do without South Africa? What *will* we do without South Africa?

For a generation that faraway country has loomed over the world, haunting it like a bad dream and yet exciting it like a wicked addiction. When F. W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela get their act together (or rather *if*, and a very speculative *if* at that, even after De Klerk's historic speech of last February 1) and create the new democratic South Africa so long dreamed of, there will be a yawning gap in our consciousness. We really won't know what to worry about next.

"South Africa" is two concepts at once. One is the country and its problems, its inequities and its iniquities.

The other is what we have made of it. What we have made are the uses and abuses of South Africa: our understanding, but much more often our misunderstanding. And my "we" is you: although incomprehension of the South African problem is almost universal, Americans are liable to complete misunderstanding. They misunderstand South Africa by projecting their own quite different racial history, guilts, and hangups.

This misunderstanding is not simply a matter of innocence or ignorance. Misunderstood, South Africa has been extraordinarily useful, to just about everyone. It was a certainty in an age of uncertainty. Jimmy Porter, the hero of John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*, complained that there were no good brave causes anymore. Well, here was one, as good and brave as could be, and wholly unambiguous. It was all so easy. There was never another "question" that appeared in such plain terms of—the words are inescapable—black and white.

That was not simply a mistake—like, let's say, the delusion afflicting many Western liberals in the interwar years that Germany had been a mostly innocent victim before and after the 1914–1918 war. To believe that, it was

necessary to misread history thoroughly, just as those other optimists who thought that everything wrong with the Soviet Union could be explained away by Russian circumstances misread history. But even when South African history was entirely misunderstood, it wasn't wrong to condemn the wickedness committed by white against black. No more could a profound knowledge of the country and its history excuse that wickedness. Despite the truism, *tout comprendre* is not *tout pardonner*. The purpose of understanding a country's past is not to forgive its present, only to find out how it got there. And that is something many have been unwilling to do in the case of South Africa. It might have spoiled their fun.

For the left in particular, South Africa was a godsend. Socialism and anti-imperialism have lost their appeal outside the former colonial territories that now go by the name of the Third World, and even there "anti-colonialism" has turned sour in practice. But look at the foot of Africa. There was a people righteously struggling to be free, oppressed by a racist regime that—better still—had links with the Western powers, notably with the American government, and with inter-

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national capitalism. My enemy's friend is my enemy. For some on the left there was an even more exquisite congruity in the financial and military links between South Africa and Israel.

Traditional Marxist socialism has undergone a personality crisis, and a popularity crisis as well, not least among Western intellectuals. Well, here was a Communist Party, the South African, that could claim to be—and, in fact, was—playing a militant part in the struggle against apartheid. Who would have the indelicacy to stop and point out that the SACP was the most unreconstructedly Stalinist party outside Moscow, a party that made the old French CP seem a model of liberal enlightenment? The SACP enthusiastically supported Moscow all the way from Hungary through Czechoslovakia to Afghanistan.

Funnily enough, South Africa was almost as convenient for the right. Very few people indeed are so openly reactionary that they will defend racist oligarchy in principle; not even Senator Jesse Helms himself says that he admires apartheid. South Africa was a neat way for conservatives to show how far they could go (but no further), by deploring racial oppression (though they didn't want to overthrow Pretoria). For some neo-conservatives, the uses of South Africa were more subtle still. Maybe they felt a little awkward about having departed from their former liberalism; South Africa was the perfect place to show that their hearts could still bleed.

Some sad, marginalized groups enjoyed a remission—the clergy, for one. Hot-gospel preachers and Roman Catholic hierarchies may still claim a popular following, but genteel Anglicanism has almost none. For all their vestigial social prestige, the Episcopalians are a tiny sect in the United States, and in terms of those who actually go to church, so indeed is the Church of England in the country where it is the Church by law established. To be blunt, the reverends aren't much revered nowadays. What a boon it was for them to find a subject on which they could once more pontificate, and actually be listened to!

There were other uses, and abuses. For white South African liberals, to start with, there was the Great Excuse, what has been called the myth of 1948. That was the year of the election in

which the Afrikaner Nationalists won power from Jan Smuts and his United Party. Despite many confident predictions by their enemies, the Nats have held power ever since. They had constructed a form of theocratic justification for white supremacy, to be called "apartness," *apartheid*. After 1948 the government introduced more and more rigorous laws to separate the races, to subjugate the blacks, and to give the Afrikaners the place in the sun denied to them since losing the Boer War, some fifty years earlier.

The English-speaking whites who had been more or less in charge of the country for that half century retreated inside a social shell; allowing constitutional opposition to dwindle, they devoted themselves to making money.

But more than that, they persuaded themselves—and, to a surprising degree, the outside world—that they were to be numbered among the victims in South Africa, and that they had absolutely nothing to do with the cruel new system of racial oppression. Who would have guessed from their complaints that in terms of white supremacy, what happened after 1948 was only a development of what had happened before? Apartheid was a theoretical construction by Afrikaner professors and clerics, a *de jure* means of perfecting the rough-and-ready *de facto* white supremacy that already existed. Above all, apartheid built on the way in which blacks since the 1870s had been forced into the industrial—which is to say the mining—economy as powerless and property-less proletarians. Their task had been to dig for the diamonds and gold that enormously enriched an English-speaking financial oligarchy, none of whom were Afrikaners.

The opposition to apartheid outside South Africa was early on afflicted by another hypocrisy. As the anti-apartheid movement became a cause, it spread a different kind of poison, without anyone's noticing. The cause was so good that any weapon would do in the fight. "McCarthyism of the left" is a phrase that has enjoyed a vogue, usually among political antagonists who are themselves on the left. What no one noticed—radicals, liberals, or conservatives—was where the phrase really applied. The campaign against South Africa employed methods not similar but identical to those of McCarthyism: boycotts, blacklists, and loyalty oaths.

Once South Africa had been expelled from international sport, the Commonwealth countries subscribing to the Gleneagles Agreement undertook to discourage—not forbid—their athletes from competing against South Africans. This led to ill feeling and misunderstanding, especially on the part of those Afro-Asian countries where the distinction between the individual and the state had not quite caught on. International cricket was disrupted for twenty years, when West Indian and Asian countries refused to admit English cricketers who had, quite legally, gone to South Africa.

Meantime, SANROC (the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee) began to compile lists of sportsmen who had South African links, with all the zeal with which other agencies had once compiled lists of Hollywood screenwriters who had Communist connections, or the Arab League's boycott office had listed Western companies that were wholly or partly Jewish-owned. Blacklists of entertainers who had worked in South Africa were drawn up. The Greater London Council, for one example, was particularly stringent in banning from all the concert halls it controlled anyone who had ever played in South Africa. The reasoning was always the same: the end justified the means. Apartheid was uniquely wicked, said the blacklisters (which was what the anti-Communist zealots of forty years ago said about Soviet tyranny).

Then sportsmen and entertainers who had been to South Africa were allowed to purge themselves by promising never to revisit the land and swearing their abhorrence of apartheid. Just so had American academics once been obliged to swear their loyalty to democracy. Loyalty oaths abjured communism once, apartheid now. The point shouldn't need making that in a free society no one ought ever be obliged to make any sort of political declaration in order to get a job.

In particular, it should not have needed making to scholars. And yet it was in academic life that the nastiest manifestations appeared. University teachers were blacklisted and excluded from international scholarly conventions because they lived and taught in South Africa. On a visit to the Cape, in defiance of the academic boycott, Conor Cruise O'Brien noted the

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reductio ad absurdum: A conference was held in Paris ("of post structuralists and whatnot") to discuss the work of J. M. Coetzee. The only person who was not present—and could not be—was the novelist himself. Because he lives and teaches in Cape Town, he was banned.

Intellectual corruption was subtler than it might at first appear. Even when this boycott was denounced, its denouncers were always keen to stress that those banned—South African anthropologists or historians, as it might be—were good liberals who had played some part in undermining the apartheid regime. But what if they weren't good liberals? If you believe in academic freedom, you believe in it for everyone: a historian who calls himself a Marxist and who may be a Communist, a zoologist who openly supports the Nats in South Africa and who may be a member of the Broederbond.

The degree to which scholarly manners were affected by *odium Africanum* is illustrated by a personal memory. A book I published in 1986 received a generally flattering review in *The New York Review of Books*, by the distinguished historian Leonard Thompson. In the course of disputing a detail of chronology about the remote history of the subcontinent, he said that something I had written was "an error with political implications, since South African propaganda has used the later date to vindicate white claims." I was incensed by this, stung into writing an ill-considered reply. But even later I wondered: Would a reviewer of a serious work of history say that a similarly remote statement—about the chronology of Ivan the Terrible's regime, say—served the interests of Moscow? And would *The New York Review* publish that?

IF THE QUESTION of South Africa perplexed and misled the rest of the world, it misled the Americans most of all. On questions of race Americans have strong feelings and long memories, and guilty consciences—and with reason, the hard-hearted might say. The comparison between the two countries' histories is in many ways highly misleading, and yet this comparison is worth making. It was made in a remarkable book, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History*, by George M. Fredrickson, of Stanford

University. I do not think anyone reading that impeccably scholarly (and impeccably liberal) book could doubt that, taken over the centuries, the American record of treatment of non-white peoples by white is in some respects much worse than the South African. Alas for such comparisons, we don't live "over the centuries," we live here and now.

That last point is something that South Africans can never grasp. Reproached with their country's present vices, they turn to the present or more likely the past vices of others: *Tu quoque*—look who's talking. The dialectical device is more exactly known in logic as *ignoratio elenchi*, or refuting a proposition that has not been advanced. Anyone who has ever talked to a nervous or prickly defender of an unjust regime knows what this means, even if he doesn't know the term. In Russia *ignoratio elenchi* was elevated to a classic (if dated) political joke, one of those stemming from the imaginary station Radio Armenia. A caller-in asks the Radio Armenia commentator what is the average wage of an industrial worker in the United States, and after a very long pause is told, "They kill Negroes."

In the same way, asked about conditions in the townships, a well-meaning South African will say, "Have you seen Kinshasa or Addis Ababa?" (to which the answer is Yes, actually, but we weren't talking about Addis or Kinshasa, we were talking about Crossroads). Or, if he is talking to an American, he may mention the Indians. Conor Cruise O'Brien was at the United Nations in the late 1950s and remembers that cynical French diplomats murmured about the American Indians whenever the American representative criticized French conduct in Algeria.

Of course, this is invalid. Two wrongs don't make a right; Wounded Knee is neither here nor there when the question is torture in Algiers or shooting in Sharpeville. And yet . . . The historian A.J.P. Taylor, who died last year, once put it more deftly, and sourly. He was discussing the formation of the German character during the centuries-long drive to conquer and exterminate the East. Of course, Taylor said, if

the Germans had succeeded in exterminating their Slav neighbours, as the Anglo-Saxons in North Amer-

ica succeeded in exterminating the Indians, the effect would have been what it has been on the Americans: the Germans would have become advocates of brotherly love and international reconciliation.

With that character, born of that history, Americans are often tempted to lecture the rest of the world—not least South Africa—about its shortcomings. It is a temptation that might be resisted. In his recent book *The Mirror at Midnight*, Adam Hochschild sees this and pauses for a moment from his recital of South African wickedness to wonder whether "perhaps an American should not be too self-righteous" as he thinks back to his own country's history.

American high-mindedness and self-righteousness have been bred out of a dark past. Everyone knows that the treatment of black Americans was infamous during and after the time of slavery, an "after" that lasted until very recently. Then the celerity with which wrongs were at any rate legally righted in America—accompanied by a certain national amnesia—distorted the perspective on South Africa. The world was shocked by the South African laws against biracial sex and marriage until they were repealed, six years ago. Who remembers that as late as 1960, not only was the South segregated but laws against "mixed marriages" still obtained in twenty-two states in the Union?

Those infamies have in theory been swept away, and to much self-congratulation. But in practice, in the age of the Reverend Al Sharpton, 2 Live Crew, and the drug war on the streets, not all American blacks have advanced in quite the direction expected thirty years ago. This complicates the emotional picture further; it leaves Americans consciously or unconsciously disappointed by the long-term results of the civil-rights struggle—and leaves them looking for another good brave cause.

The trouble is that, interesting as it is for a scholar to compare them, the two countries' histories are so utterly different that comparisons are likely to confuse the issue, either way. It is hard for Americans to visit South Africa, or look at it from the outside, without seeing it in terms of their own race-relations history—and thus being both too censorious and too optimistic.

The censoriousness is obvious

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enough. The naive optimism that has swelled up over the years is almost more insidious. It is easy to understand and forgive the optimism of black South Africans, even the township "comrades." Easy to remember also is that elation like theirs is always dashed; in Yeats's lines, "Parnell came down the road, he said to a cheering man: 'Ireland shall get her freedom and you still break stone.'" Whatever the political changes, the townships will still be poor, the rural "homelands" (whatever they are renamed) poorer. One of the most acute reporters in South Africa recently had a conversation with a comrade in which the reporter observed that after the takeover, capital and expertise would still be needed for the mines. His interlocutor said, Maybe we shall do without the mines. In the face of that sort of religious innocence, despair is tempting.

NO, THE PARTICULAR optimism to which American observers of South Africa are prone comes—like their particular censoriousness—from the projection of their particular experience. After two centuries of slavery and one of Jim Crow, blacks formally won civil rights in the 1960s. Blacks could vote at the same stations, ride in the same bus seats, and sit at the same lunch counters as whites.

All this perplexes the observer of South Africa. Having expected something like pre-war Mississippi, he lights up with joy to find that Johannesburg Public Library or the buses in Cape Town are desegregated (as they have been for years), or that the "Immorality Act" has been repealed. But the South African problem is not about segregation in that simple sense, nor about sex. The American reporter sees the continuing injustices of South Africa, and then misses the point. Adam Hochschild lists all that ails the majority in South Africa and ends his catalogue, "And above all, blacks cannot, in a way that has real meaning, vote."

This is to project the civil-rights experience, with all that long struggle for the registration of black voters, and forget the rest of Africa. It might have occurred to Hochschild that there are fifty member states of the Organization of African Unity, and that you don't need the fingers of two hands to count those in which blacks can, in a way that has real meaning, vote—or, for that

matter, those that have the elements of the rule of law and freedom of expression. "Majority rule" has been much bandied about as a verbal talisman, against countries like Rhodesia as it was and South Africa as it is; in what sense, though, does the majority rule in Mali or Zambia?

An obsession with abstract democracy and "the vote" confuses the issue in two ways at once. The American civil-rights movement gave birth to Black Power. But this phrase was a misnomer. Power had nothing to do with it. Civil rights had not been denied to blacks because they would wield power once they held them, and since obtaining civil rights blacks, aside from in a few municipal jurisdictions, have not in fact won any real measure of political power or even threatened to. The American struggle was about limited civil-rights goals, not about who should rule, and if blacks had outnumbered whites in the United States, it is not too cynical to imagine that the struggle would have taken a very different form, and had a different outcome.

In South Africa the struggle is all about power. And that is why the conflict there has always been and remains intractable: it is about Lenin's phrase "who will prevail?"

This misapprehension of the South Africa question isn't, of course, confined to Americans. South Africans themselves are quite capable of not seeing their own country clearly, of entirely missing the point. In *The Mind of South Africa*, Allister Sparks writes that "South Africa is totally dependent on the people it represents," words that so impressed Nadine Gordimer that she quoted them as one of "his devastatingly direct statements of the unacknowledged."

It does not seem to occur to either Sparks or Gordimer that (as Beethoven and Groucho Marx both said, in different contexts) the reverse is also true. The mines of Kimberley and the Witwatersrand could not have been dug without dirt-cheap black labor, but they could not have been dug either without European (and American) capital and expertise. The black masses in South Africa are totally dependent economically on the society that has repressed them politically.

In his book *My Traitor's Heart* the renegade Afrikaner Rian Malan gazes wistfully at Old Potch Road, the

wretched, potholed, traffic-clogged lane that runs from Soweto to Johannesburg. "If South Africa were a black-run country," he writes, "Old Potch Road would be a six-lane highway." It does not seem to occur to Malan that if South Africa were a black-run country, Old Potch Road might be a no-lane highway.

South Africans like Malan, with his hippie daydreams of liberation, and Allister Sparks, with his catalogue of condescension—"Africans were a profoundly spiritual people"; they "cultivated a respect for human values and human worth far in advance of the materialistic West"—are, as I say, misleading enough.

The American problem is different, and more acute. One should never attribute motive, but reading Americans reporting from South Africa, I often feel that they are at the very best trying hard not to strike attitudes and parade their own good feelings. But they are not trying very hard to distinguish unlike from unlike. One deep American instinct stresses the importance of democratic institutions, though, to say the least, these will be of only marginal relevance to whether a post-apartheid South Africa succeeds.

Another instinct harks back to the noble savage and the golden age, and is linked, I suspect, to a deep psychological level by feelings about the original Americans and their fate. In his book *Fighting Years*, Steven Mufson criticizes the "myth that whites raised destitute blacks from poverty," and states further that "blacks lived simply but comfortably before white settlement." This is sentimental silliness. The comfortable simplicity in which blacks lived before the whites came was a preliterate, pre-industrial society with a good deal of intermittent bloodshed. Who knows whether it was morally superior or inferior to European society? The one thing for sure is that most Africans who have had the opportunity—like most European peasants—have left the simple comfort of rural society as soon as they could.

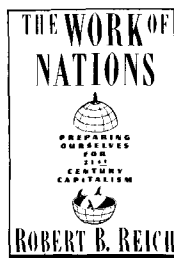
Dishonesty about—let's be kinder and say misunderstanding of—the past is doubly disastrous when the future seems so exhilarating but gives so much cause for apprehension. Moving forward will be hard enough, but we must first see South Africa straight.

—Geoffrey Wheatcroft

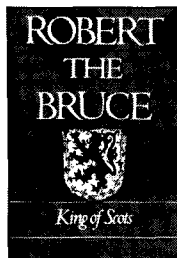
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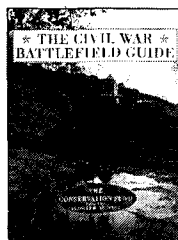
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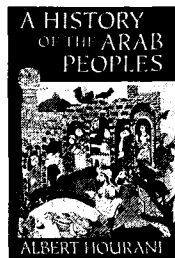
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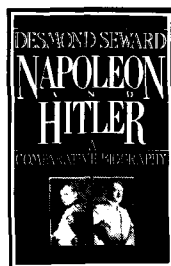
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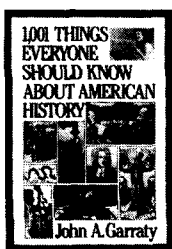
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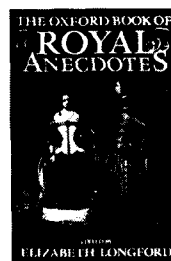
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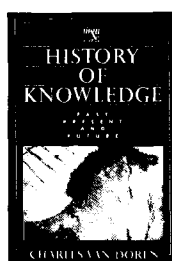
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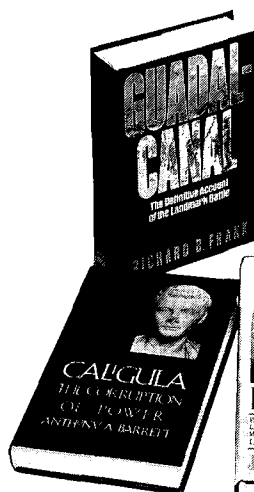
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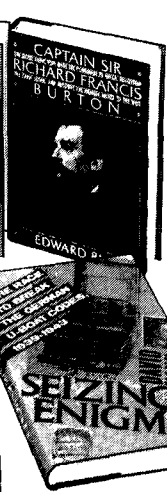
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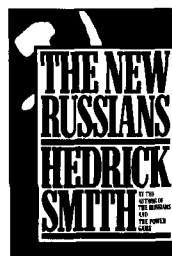
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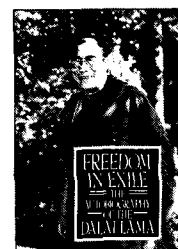
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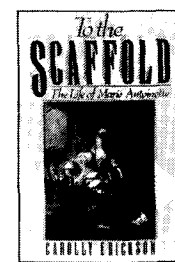
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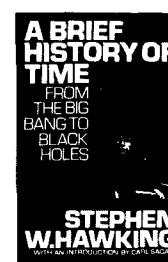
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Engraving from a 1598 edition of Bartolomé de las Casas's *Brevísima relación*

"When the cacique was bound to the post, a Franciscan friar . . . told him some of the matters of our Faith, which the chieftain had never before heard. . . . The padre told the cacique that if he wished to believe these things, he would go to Heaven . . . but if not, he would go to Hell and suffer eternal torment and sorrow. The cacique . . . asked the friar if Christians went to Heaven, and was told that the good ones did. The cacique, without further thought, said that he did not wish to go to Heaven but to Hell, so as not to be with Spaniards or see such cruel people"
—translated from the Spanish by Philip Wayne Powell

SPAIN

The Black Legend

Spaniards hope to put an end next year to a propaganda campaign against their country that began half a millennium ago

DURING THE sixteenth century the enemies of imperial Spain, hopelessly outgunned by its armies, struck back using words. In the years leading up to and following the Spanish Armada, in 1588, pamphleteers from London to Wittenberg put out the word that Spaniards were an uncivilized, greedy people who reveled in bloodshed and destruction. They accused Spain of atrocities in its conquest of the Americas, and in the conduct of the Inquisition. These charges were repeated and embel-

lished over the subsequent four centuries of rivalry between the Spanish and other Western powers: the English, Dutch, Germans, Italians, French, and Americans. Alfred Lord Tennyson deemed them "inquisition dogs" and "children of the devil." Montaigne accused the Spanish of "indiscriminate butchery as of savage beasts."

La Leyenda Negra, the Black Legend, endures to this day in the stereotyping of Hispanics in Europe and the Western Hemisphere as lazy, uneducated, corrupt, and cruel. Anyone who has read a Zorro comic book or watched Errol Flynn and Claude Rains in *The Sea Hawk* cannot help noticing that Spaniards, or their leaders, seem to come in for routine vilification. A diplomat formerly in the Spanish Embassy in Washington, D.C., recently prepared a report published in Spain lamenting the tenacity of anti-Spanish biases in America, and concluding, "There is not much difference between the Black Legend and racism." The diplomat listed *percepciones* that

he believes are shared by the American people with respect to Spain and Spaniards:

- Catholics and colonizers.
- A loser country.
- Bitter experience of the War of '98.
- The record of the Civil War.

Officials in Madrid hope to be able to erase this persistently negative image once and for all, during the quincentenary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas, in 1992. "There has been this predominant Anglo-Saxon world culture that has tended to ignore Spain, with a lot of clichés about our ruthlessness and backwardness," says Ion de la Riva, Spain's former assistant secretary of state for international cooperation. "We want this to stop, to let people know that the conquistadors are long gone, Franco is dead, and Spain has become a modern nation."

THE BLACK LEGEND originated five centuries ago, when Spain was the greatest power in the West. Rich and arrogant, Spain dominated Europe for two centuries and the Americas for three, making life miserable for a host of enemies who have proved to have long and unforgiving memories. Protestants hated and feared the Spaniards for the bloody Catholic Counter-Reformation, Englishmen for the Armada, Dutch and Germans for decades of religious persecution, Italians and French for humiliations on the battlefield, Latin Americans for the excesses of conquest and colonization.

The propagandists' simple themes were driven home in hundreds of publications printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Spaniards were evil. Their might came not from God but from the devil. The proof was in the horrors of the Inquisition, the seemingly genocidal *conquista* of the Western Hemisphere, and the depredations of Spanish troops in Europe. A Dutch tract published in 1603 warned:

This Spanish monster slyly attacks you. As they murdered the Indian lords, they have also killed many of your princes. . . . As long as you keep the Spaniard in the nest . . . as long as you quench the bloodthirsty Spanish desire. So long you remain like the Indians, unfree. So, drive away the Spanish tyranny!

Admittedly, the propagandists had a great deal of raw truth to draw on. The Spanish, trying to hold together an unwieldy empire, behaved ruthlessly in a ruthless age. In the Americas they showed all the brutal expediency one might expect during the largest and most remote gold rush in history. What the propagandists didn't say, however, is that Spanish behavior in Europe and the Americas was hardly unique. German, Dutch, and English conquerors shared the Spaniards' taste for gold, slaves, and territory, and seldom shied away from brutalizing European enemies or, when their time came, Indian and African populations.

Nor did the propagandists mention that the Spanish themselves sharply condemned the excesses in the Americas. Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566), the Bishop of Chiapas, spent half a century vociferously attacking the abuses of the *conquista*, criticisms that led to repeated attempts at reform by the Spanish government in the sixteenth century. The bishop's lurid, sometimes exaggerated accounts became a chief source of information for anti-Spanish propagandists. Excerpts from Las Casas's reports and essays appear again and again over the centuries, translated into numerous languages and often prefaced by sensational titles: for example, "Popery Truly Display'd in its Bloody Colours: Or, a Faithful Narrative of the Horrid and Unexampled Massacres, Butcheries, and all manner of Cruelties that Hell and Malice could invent, committed by the Popish Spanish." As late as 1898, during the Spanish-American War, his accounts were being published in the United States to bolster support for the American intervention in Cuba.

Spanish power began a slow decline in the mid-seventeenth century, bringing into play a new theme of the Black Legend: that Spain was a has-been. As British, French, Dutch, and, later, American armies gradually cut Spain down to size, intellectuals and politicians north of the Pyrenees derided the former imperial power's every failure. When the Enlightenment took hold in northern Europe, conservative, Catholic Spain became the butt of jokes in plays and essays and the villainous foil in countless rhetorical lessons by the likes of Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Defoe.

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By the early 1800s Spain was a hollow shell. Humiliated in Europe by Napoleon, in South America by Simón Bolívar, and in various places by the armies of half a dozen nations, Spain lost its empire and sank into a century and a half of stagnation and obscurity, violently punctuated by revolution and civil war. Spain missed not only the Enlightenment but also the Industrial Revolution and the rise of democracy in Europe. After the Second World War, Spain under Francisco Franco enjoyed little of the affluence that the rest of Europe did.

The Black Legend lived on well into the 1960s, when British travel writers were still taking potshots at Franco's Spain, albeit dryly: Jan Morris called Spaniards "negative individualists" and James Kirkup compared Spanish pride to "wind on the stomach, like heartburn."

ONE STRIKING feature of the Black Legend is that the Spaniards for centuries did little about it. In 1604 the great Spanish satirist Francisco Gómez de Quevedo y Villegas published his book *España Defendida*, which acknowledged the prevalence of anti-Spanish tracts and attempted to set the record straight. Other Golden Age intellectuals made passing references critical of outsiders who vilified the Spanish character. But it was not until this century that Spanish scholars began systematically to strike back. A journalist named Julián Juderías coined the term "La Leyenda Negra" in 1914, in a book that diagnosed the Black Legend as having grown out of

an atmosphere created by the fantastic accounts of Spain . . . by the systematic ignorance of whatever is favorable and worthy of honor . . . based upon happenings which are exaggerated, badly interpreted, or false in entirety.

Juderías's vigorous defense struck a chord among Spanish-speaking peoples. "Until Juderías," says Lawrence Clayton, a professor of Latin American history at the University of Alabama, "Hispanic people half believed that the Black Legend was true, because this is what the world had been telling them for so long. Now they began to understand where these anti-Hispanic attitudes came from." Juderías's work

launched decades of popular and scholarly attempts to debunk the Black Legend, and not only in Spain. In the United States some of the most important scholarship appeared in the 1970s—a turbulent decade in Spain and much of Latin America—in such books as Charles Gibson's *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New* (1971) and Philip Wayne Powell's *Tree of Hate: Propaganda and Prejudices Affecting United States Relations With the Hispanic World* (1971).



Las Casas, chronicler of depravity

Scholarly work on the subject continues at a brisk pace.

Now Spain is preparing to launch one of the costliest public-relations campaigns in history: a \$30 billion extravaganza intended to alter forever Spain's global image. The centerpiece of "the '92" is the summer Olympic Games, which will be held in Barcelona. Spain's program for 1992 also includes Expo '92, a world's fair to be held in Seville; a multibillion-dollar nationwide program to revamp everything from museums and monuments to bridges and highways; and ambitious plans to promote Spain and Hispanic culture in Latin America, the United States, and Europe.

HAPPILY FOR Spain, the Columbus quincentenary happens to fall in the same year the country becomes a full member of the European Community, an event that will both symbolically and practically mark the end of Spain's long isolation from

the European mainstream. Indeed, for Spaniards 1992 will be a time to celebrate not only the past 500 years but also the past fifteen, which have seen Spain rebound from the stagnation of fascism in the 1970s to become the fastest-growing economy in Europe in the late 1980s.

Spaniards today are driving more cars, buying more televisions and other electronics, and wearing more-stylish clothing. Spanish directors like Pedro Almodóvar (*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*) and José Luis Garci (*Begin the Begin*) are making movies that win international acclaim. Spanish writers like Felix de Azúa (*Diary of a Humiliated Man*) and Lourdes Ortiz (*The Motives of Circe*) are publishing books widely praised in Europe.

Spain has shrugged off its past to a remarkable degree, though what is happening is less a negation than a normalization. One former Spanish government official says, "The past used to be oppressive, a heavy burden. Now it is being revised, becoming less ominous, though I assure you there are still beautiful women in Spain and there are still men who are brave. We have not lost these things. We are just trying to put everything in its proper perspective."

There are those in Spain who look toward European economic integration in 1992 and speak of an end to nationalism. Madrid sophisticates use terms like "occidental planet," "global village," and "internationalism." But sharp cultural sensitivities persist. Many Spaniards—taxi drivers, waiters, truck drivers, executives—respond initially to questions about the Black Legend with what seems to be a 1990s detachment, but this equanimity will sometimes be replaced by annoyance if the subject is not dropped. Even younger Spaniards—those who came of age during the 1980s—show traces of anger that can transform the conversation at a dinner party from mundane chitchat into unexpectedly vehement defenses of Spanish virtues and history.

"It is difficult to imagine a Spanish filmmaker or a novelist making fun of the Black Legend," says Roberto Blatt, a philosopher from Uruguay who lives in Madrid. "Maybe the children of their children will be able to laugh at this thing."

—David Ewing Duncan



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A whole two days off from work, in which we can do what we please, has only recently become a near-universal right. What we choose to do looks increasingly like work, and idleness has acquired a bad name. Herein, a history of leisure

WAITING FOR THE

WEEKEND

BY WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI

THE WORD "WEEKEND" STARTED LIFE AS "week-end" but lost its hyphen somewhere along the way, ceasing to be merely the end of the week and acquiring, instead, an autonomous and sovereign existence. "Have a good weekend," we say to one another—never "Have a good week." Where once the week consisted of weekdays and Sunday, it now consists of weekdays and weekend. Ask most people to name the first day of the week and they will answer, Monday, of course; fifty years ago the answer would have been Sunday. Wall

calendars still show Sunday as the first day of the week, and children are taught the days of the week starting with Sunday, but how long will these conventions last? Sunday, once the day of rest, has become merely one of two days of what is often strenuous activity. Although we continue to celebrate the traditional religious and civic holidays—holy days—these now account for only a small portion of our total nonworking days, and are overshadowed by the 104 days of secular weekends.

For most of us life assumes a different rhythm on the weekend; we sleep in, cut the grass, wash the car. We



also go to the movies, especially during hot weather. We travel. And of course we exercise and play games. Some of these pastimes, like tennis, have an old history and a newfound popularity; others, like whitewater canoeing, windsurfing, and hang-gliding, are more recent. Most are distinguished from nineteenth-century recreations such as croquet and golf by their relative arduousness and even riskiness.

Although the weekend is a time for sports, for shopping, and for household chores, it is foremost a manifestation of the structure of our leisure. The chief *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of leisure is "time which one can spend as one pleases." That is, "free" time. But in one of his popular columns in *The Illustrated London News*—a Saturday paper—G. K. Chesterton pointed out that leisure should not be confused with liberty. Contrary to most people's expectations, the presence of the first by no means assures the availability of the second. This confusion arose, according to Chesterton, because the term "leisure" is used to describe three different things: "The first is being allowed to do something. The second is being allowed to do anything. And the third (and perhaps most rare and precious) is being allowed to do nothing." The first, he acknowledged, was the most common form of leisure, and the one that of late—he was writing in the early 1890s—had shown the greatest quantitative increase. The second—the liberty to fashion what one willed out of one's leisure time—was more unusual and tended to be the province of artists and other creative individuals. It was the third, however, that was obviously his favorite, because it allowed idle-

ness—in Chesterton's view, the truest form of leisure.

Perhaps only someone as portly as Chesterton (Maisie Ward, his biographer, estimated that he weighed almost 300 pounds) could rhapsodize over idleness. More likely, inactivity attracted him because he was the least lazy of men; his bibliography lists more than a hundred published books—biographies, novels, essays, poetry, and short stories. He was also a magazine editor and a lecturer and broadcaster. Although he managed to cram all this into a relatively short life (he died at sixty-two), it was, as his physique would suggest, a life replete with material enjoyments, and surprisingly unhurried. Not a life of leisure, perhaps, but one carried out at a leisurely pace.

Chesterton's observation that modern society provided many opportunities for leisure but made it "more and more easy to get some things and impossible to get others" continues to be true. Should you want to play tennis or golf, for example, courts and courses abound. Fancy a video? There are plenty of specialty stores, lending libraries, and mail-order clubs. Lepidopterists, however, will have a difficult time finding unfenced countryside in which to practice their avocation. If your pastime is laying bricks and you do not have a rural estate, as Winston Churchill had, you will not find a bricklaying franchise at your neighborhood mall. Better take up golf instead.

Chesterton argued that a man compelled by lack of choice—or by social pressure—to play golf when he would rather be attending to some solitary hobby was not so different from the slave who might have several hours of leisure while his overseer slept but had to be ready to work at a moment's notice. Neither could be said to be the master of his leisure. Both had free time but not freedom. To press this parallel further, have we become enslaved by the weekend?

At first glance it is an odd question,



for surely it is our work that enslaves us, not our free time. We call people who become obsessed by their jobs workaholics, but we don't have a word for someone who is possessed by recreation. Maybe we should. I have many acquaintances for whom weekend activities seem more important than workaday existence, and who behave as if the week were merely an irritating interference in their real, extracurricular lives. I sometimes have the impression that to really know these weekend sailors, mountain climbers, and horsewomen, I would have to accompany them on their outings and excursions—see them in their natural habitat, so to speak. But would I see a different person, or merely the same one governed by different conventions of comportment, behavior, accoutrement, and dress?

I'm always charmed by old photographs of skiers which show groups of people in what appear to be street clothes, with un-

slavement of a kind. People used to "play" tennis; now they "work" on their backhand. It is not hard to imagine what Chesterton would have thought of such dedication; this is just the sort of laborious pursuit of play that he so often derided. "If a thing is worth doing," he once wrote, "it is worth doing badly."

Chesterton held the traditional view that leisure was different from the type of recreation typically afforded by the modern weekend. His own leisure pastimes included an eclectic mix of the unfashionable and the bohemian—sketching, collecting weapons, and playing with the cardboard cutouts of his toy theater. Leisure was the opportunity for personal, even idiosyncratic,

pursuits, not for ordered recreation; it was for private reverie rather than for public spectacles. If a sport was undertaken, it was for the love of playing—not of winning, nor even of playing well. Above all, free time



HAVE WE BECOME ENSLAVED BY THE WEEKEND? AT FIRST GLANCE IT IS AN ODD QUESTION, FOR SURELY IT IS OUR WORK THAT ENSLAVES US, NOT OUR RECREATIONS.

complicated pieces of bent wood strapped to sturdy walking boots. These men and women have a playful and unaffected air. Today every novice is caparisoned in skin-tight spandex, like an Olympic racer, and even cross-country skiing, a simple enough pastime, has been infected by a preoccupation with correct dress, authentic terminology, and up-to-date equipment. This reflects an attitude toward play which is different from what it was in the past. Most outdoor sports, once simply muddled through, are now undertaken with a high degree of seriousness. "Professional" used to be a word that distinguished someone who was paid for an activity from the sportsman; today the word has come to denote anyone with a high degree of proficiency; "professional-quality" equipment is available to—and desired by—all. Conversely, "amateur," a wonderful word literally meaning "lover," has been degraded to mean a rank beginner or anyone without a certain level of skill. "Just an amateur," we say; it is not, as it once was, a compliment.

The lack of carelessness in our recreation, the sense of obligation to get things right, and the emphasis on protocol and decorum do represent an en-

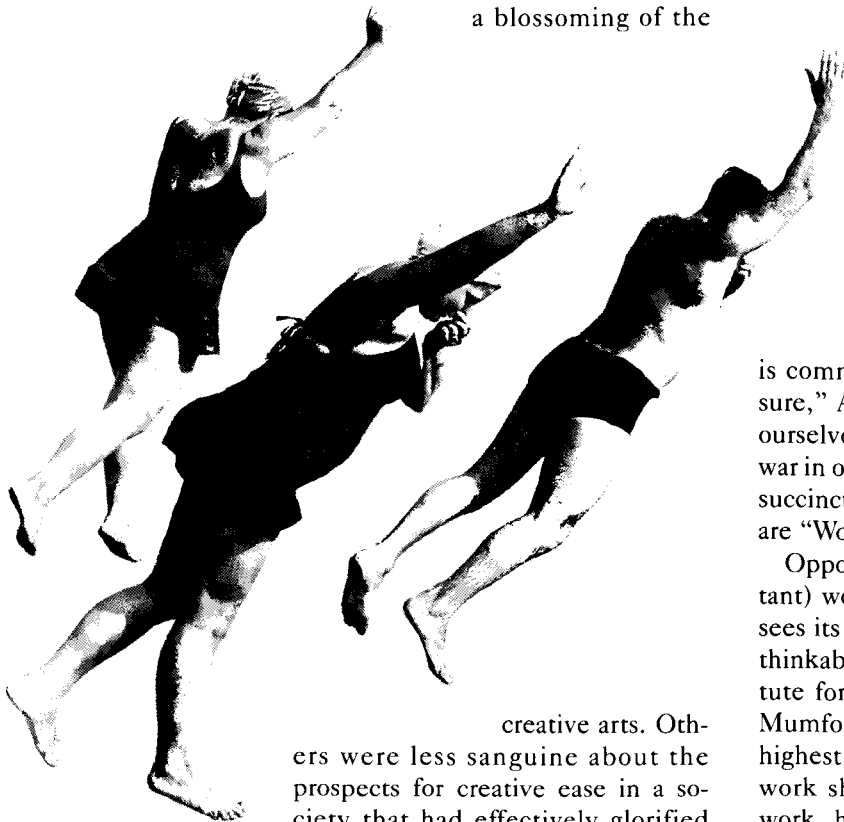
was to remain that: free of the encumbrance of convention, free of the need for busyness, free for the "noble habit of doing nothing at all." That hardly describes the modern weekend.

Work Versus Leisure

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WEEKDAY-weekend cycle? Is it yet another symptom of the standardization and bureaucratization of everyday life that social critics such as Lewis Mumford and Jacques Ellul have warned about? Is the weekend merely the cunning marketing ploy of the materialist culture, a device to increase consumption? Is it a deceptive placebo to counteract the boredom and meaninglessness of the workplace?

Or is this the heralded Leisure Society? If so, it is hardly what was anticipated. The decades leading up to the 1930s saw a continuing reduction in the number of hours in the workweek, from just under sixty to just under fifty, and during the Great Depression even below thirty-five. There was every reason to think that this trend would continue and workdays would grow shorter and

shorter. This, and widespread automation, would eventually lead to universal leisure. Not everyone agreed that this would be a good thing; there was much speculation about what people would do with their newfound freedom, and some psychologists worried that universal leisure would really mean universal boredom. Hardly, argued the optimists; it would provide the opportunity for self-improvement, adult education, and a blossoming of the



creative arts. Others were less sanguine about the prospects for creative ease in a society that had effectively glorified labor.

Universal leisure did not come to pass, or at least it did not arrive in the expected form. For one thing, the workday appears to have stabilized at about eight hours. Automation has reduced jobs in certain industries, as was predicted, but overall employment has increased, not decreased, although not necessarily in high-paying jobs. Women have entered the work force, with the result that more, not fewer, people are working; since housework still needs to be done, it can be argued that in many families there is really less leisure than before. On the other hand, the development of the weekend

has caused a redistribution of leisure time, which for many people has effectively shortened the length of the workweek. This redistribution, coupled with more disposable income, has made it possible to undertake recreation in a variety of unexpected ways—some creative, some not—and do so throughout the year instead of at annual intervals.

All these developments have called into question the traditional relationship between leisure and work, a relationship about which our culture has always been ambivalent. Generally speaking, there are two opposing schools of thought. On the one hand is the ideal—held by thinkers as disparate as Karl Marx and the Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper—of a society increasingly emancipated from labor. This notion echoes the Aristotelian view that the goal of life is happiness, and that leisure, as distinguished from amusement and recreation, is the state necessary for its achievement. “It is commonly believed that happiness depends on leisure,” Aristotle wrote in his *Ethics*, “because we occupy ourselves so that we may have leisure, just as we make war in order that we may live at peace.” Or, to put it more succinctly, as did the title of Loverboy’s 1981 hit song, we are “Working for the Weekend.”

Opposed to this is the more modern (so-called Protestant) work ethic that values labor for its own sake, and sees its reduction—or, worse, its elimination—as an unthinkable degradation of human life. “There is no substitute for work except other serious work,” wrote Lewis Mumford, who considered that meaningful work was the highest form of human activity. According to this view, work should be its own reward, whether it is factory work, housework, or a workout. Leisure, equated with idleness, is suspect; leisure without toil, or disconnected from it, is altogether sinister. The weekend is not free time but break time—an intermission.

But I am getting ahead of myself. I want first to examine something that will shed light on the relation between work and leisure: how we came to adopt a rigorous division of our everyday lives into five days of work and two of play, and how the weekend became the chief temporal institution of the modern age. And how, in turn, this universally accepted structure has affected the course and nature of our leisure—whether it involves playing golf, laying bricks, or just daydreaming.

IN CHESTERTON'S VIEW, LEISURE WAS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL PURSUITS, NOT ORDERED RECREATION; FOR PRIVATE REVERIE RATHER THAN FOR PUBLIC SPECTACLES.

The Invention of the Week

OUR CHIEF OCCASION FOR LEISURE—THE WEEKEND—is the direct product of the mechanical practice of measuring time. Counting days in chunks of seven now comes so naturally that it's easy to forget that this is an unusual way to mark the passage of time. Day spans the interval between the rising and the setting of the sun; the twenty-four-hour day is the duration between one dawn and the next. The month measures—or once did—the time required for the moon to wax, become full, and wane; and the year counts one full cycle of the seasons. What does the week measure? Nothing. At least, nothing visible. No natural phenomenon occurs every seven days—nothing happens to the sun, the moon, or the stars. The week is an artificial, man-made interval.

Generally speaking, our timekeeping is flexible, full of inconsistencies. The length of the day varies with the season; the duration of the month is irregular. Adjustments need to be made: every four years we add a day to February; every 400 years we add a day to the centurial year. The week, however, is exactly seven days long, now and forever. We say that there are fifty-two weeks in a year, but that is an approximation, since the week is not a subdivision of either the month or the year. The week mocks the calendar and marches relentlessly and unbroken across time, paying no attention to the seasons. The British scholar F. H. Colson, who in 1926 wrote a fascinating monograph on the subject, described the week as an "intruder." It is an intruder that arrived relatively late. The week emerged as the final feature of what became the Western calendar sometime in the second or third century A.D., in ancient Rome. But it can be glimpsed in different

guises—not always seven days long, and not always continuous—in many earlier civilizations.

Seven appeared as a magical number among the Babylonians, as early as the third millennium B.C., and played an important role in their calendar. There were seven heavenly bodies with apparent motion in the sky: the "erring" seven, the seven "wanderers"—that is, the seven planets of antiquity (including the sun and the moon). Whether they suggested the belief in the magic number or merely reinforced it is not clear. In any case, as astronomy—and astrology—spread from Babylonia to Greece, Egypt, and Rome, the seven heavenly bodies became identified with the great gods of the pantheon.

At the time that the planetary week became popular in Rome, there was already a seven-day week in place: the Judaic Sabbath observance. It is possible—although the idea is disputed by many scholars—that the Jews adopted this method of timekeeping during their exile in Babylonia in the sixth century B.C., and converted the septenary fascination into their Sabbath. The adoption of a continuous seven-day period independent of the lunar cycle was



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unusual, and exactly why the Jews evolved this mechanism is unclear. According to the Old Testament, the Sabbath was "their" day, given to them—and them alone—by Jehovah. Unquestionably, its very singularity appealed to the exiled Jews as a way of differentiating themselves from the alien Babylonian Gentiles who surrounded them. In any case, that the Sabbath occurred on every seventh day, irrespective of the seasons, was a powerful idea, for it overrode all other existing calendars.

The origin of the planetary week is obscure as regards place and time. Dion Cassius, a Roman historian who lived in the third century A.D., thought that the planetary week was conceived in Egypt, but modern scholars dispute this claim; more likely it was a Hellenistic practice that migrated to Rome. He also maintained that the planetary week was a relatively recent invention. There

is some evidence, however, of a planetary week during the Augustan period, 200 years before, and it may have originated even earlier. What is certain is that by Dion's era the habit of measuring time in cycles of seven days was already established in private life throughout the Roman Empire.

The week was many things to many people, sometimes many things to the same people. It was magical and practical both. A superstition at first, it survived as a social convention, much as shaking hands with the right hand has endured because there is a need for a gesture to represent friendly feelings to a stranger. The week was a short unit of time around which people could organize their lives, their work, and their leisure. At the same time, the week was a simple and memorable device for relating everyday activities to supernatural concerns, whether these involved observing a commandment from Jehovah, commemorating Christ's resurrection, receiving the influence of a planetary deity, or, just to be safe, all three.

The roots of the week lie deep, too deep to understand fully. An air of mystery surrounds the week; perhaps that, too, is a part of its appeal. It is an observance that has been distilled over centuries of use, molded through common belief and ordinary usage. Above all, it is a *popular* practice that took hold without magisterial sanction. This, more than anything else, explains its durability. Less an intruder than an unofficial guest, the week was invited in through the kitchen door, and has become a friend of the family—a useful friend, for whatever else it did, the seven-day cycle provided a convenient structure for the repetitive rhythm of daily activities. It included not only a day for worship but also a day for baking bread, for washing, for cleaning house, for going to market—and for resting. Surely this over-and-over quality has always been one of the attractions of the week—and of the weekend. "Once a week" is one of the commonest measures of time. The planetary week is not a grand chronometer of celestial movements or a gauge of seasonal changes. It is something both simpler and more profound: a measure of ordinary, everyday life.

From Day Off to Days Off

THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY FINDS THE earliest recorded use of the word "weekend" in an 1879 issue of *Notes and Queries*, an English magazine. "In Staffordshire, if a person leaves home at the end of his week's work on the Saturday afternoon to spend the evening of Saturday and the

following Sunday with friends at a distance," the magazine citation goes, "he is said to be spending his *week-end* at So-and-so." This is obviously a definition, which suggests that the word had only recently come into use. It is also important to note that the "week's work" is described as ending on the Saturday afternoon. It was precisely this early ending to the week that produced a holiday period of a day and a half—the first weekend. This innovation—and it was a uniquely British one—occurred in roughly the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

Throughout the eighteenth century the workweek ended on Saturday evening; Sunday was the weekly day off. The Reformation, and later Puritanism, had made Sunday the weekly holy day in an attempt to displace the saints' days and religious festivals of Catholicism (the Catholic Sunday was merely one holy day among many). Although the taboo on work was more or less respected, the strictures of Sabbatarianism that prohibited merriment and levity on the Lord's Day were rejected by most Englishmen, who saw the holiday as a chance to drink, gamble, and generally have a good time.

For most people Sunday was the only official weekly holiday, but this did not necessarily mean that the life of the average British worker was one of unremitting toil. Far from it. Work was always interrupted to commemorate the annual feasts of Christmas, New Year, and Whitsuntide (the week beginning with the seventh Sunday after Easter). These traditional holidays were universally observed, but the length of the breaks varied. Depending on local convention, work stopped for anywhere from a few days to two weeks. There were also communal holidays associated with special, occasional events such as prizefights, horse races, and other sporting competitions, and also fairs, circuses, and traveling menageries. When one of these attractions arrived in a village or town, regular work more or less stopped while people flocked to gape and marvel at the exotic animals, equestrian acrobats, and assorted human freaks and oddities.

The idea of spontaneously closing up shop or leaving the workbench for the pursuit of pleasure may strike the modern reader as irresponsible, but for the eighteenth-century worker the line between work and play was blurred. Many recreational activities were directly linked to the workplace, since trade guilds often organized their own outings and had their own singing and drinking clubs and their own preferred taverns.

Eighteenth-century workers had, as Hugh Cunning-

ham puts it in *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, "a high preference for leisure, and for long periods of it." This preference was hardly something new. What was new was the ability, in prosperous Georgian England, of so many people to indulge it. For the first time in centuries many workers earned more than survival wages. Now they had choices: they could buy goods or leisure. They could work more and earn more, or they could forgo the extra wages and enjoy more free time instead. Most chose the latter course. This was especially true for the highly paid skilled workers, who had the greatest degree of economic freedom, but even general laborers, who were employed at day rates, had a choice in the matter. Many of these worked intensively, sometimes for much more than the customary ten hours a day, and then quit to enjoy themselves until their money ran out.

It was not unusual for sporting events, fairs, and other celebrations to last several days. Since Sunday was always an official holiday, usually the days following were added on. This produced a regular custom of staying away from work on Monday, frequently doing so also on Tuesday, and then working long hours at the end of the week to catch up. Among some trades the Monday holiday achieved what amounted to an official status. Weavers and miners, for example, regularly took a holiday on the Monday after payday—which occurred weekly, on Friday or Saturday. This practice became so common that it was called "keeping Saint Monday."

Saint Monday may have started as an individual preference for staying away from work—whether to relax, to recover from drunkenness, or both—but its popularity during the 1850s and 1860s was ensured by the enterprise of the leisure industry. During that period sporting events,



AMONG SOME TRADES THE MONDAY HOLIDAY ACHIEVED WHAT AMOUNTED TO AN OFFICIAL STATUS. THIS PRACTICE BECAME SO COMMON THAT IT WAS CALLED "KEEPING SAINT MONDAY."

such as horse races and cricket matches, often took place on Mondays, since their organizers knew that many working-class customers would be prepared to take the day off. And since many public events were prohibited on the Sabbath, Monday became the chief occasion for secular recreations. Attendance at botanical gardens and museums soared on Monday, which was also the day that ordinary people went to the theater and the dance hall, and the day that workingmen's social clubs held their weekly meetings.

The energy of entrepreneurs, assisted by advertising, was an important influence not only on the diffusion and persistence of Saint Monday but also on leisure in general. Hence a curious and apparently contradictory situation: not so much the commercialization of leisure as the discovery of leisure thanks to commerce. This distinction is worth bearing in mind when one considers the complaint commonly made today that contemporary leisure is being "tainted" or "corrupted" by commercialism. Beginning in the eighteenth century, with magazines, coffeehouses, and music rooms, and continuing throughout the nineteenth, with professional sports and holiday travel, the modern idea of personal leisure emerged at the same time as the business of leisure. The first could not have happened without the second.

Saint Monday had many critics. Religious groups campaigned against the tradition, which they saw as linked to the drinking and dissipation that, in their eyes, dishonored the Sabbath. They were joined by middle-class social reformers and by proponents of rational recreation, who also had an interest in altering Sunday behavior. By the end of the century many shops and factories had begun closing on Saturday afternoons, leaving a half-holiday for household chores and social activities—an evening at the dance hall or the pub—and permitting Sunday to be used exclusively for prayer and sober recreations.

It's unlikely that the Saturday half-holiday would have spread as rapidly as it did if it had not been for the support of the factory owners. Factory owners had little to gain from insisting on a six-day week of workdays of up to twelve hours if on some days so few workers showed up that the factory had to be shut down anyway. The proposal for a Saturday half-holiday offered a way out, and factory owners supported it in return for a commitment to regular attendance on the part of their employees. Half Saturdays and shorter workdays became the pattern followed by all later labor negotiations, and by legislation governing the length of the workday.

In the 1870s people began to speak of "week-ending" or "spending the week-end." The country houses of the wealthy were generally located in the Home Counties, in the vicinity of London, and were now easily reached by train. It became fashionable to go to the country on Friday afternoon and return to the city on Monday, and these house parties became an important feature of upper-class social life. Weekend outings, often to the sea-

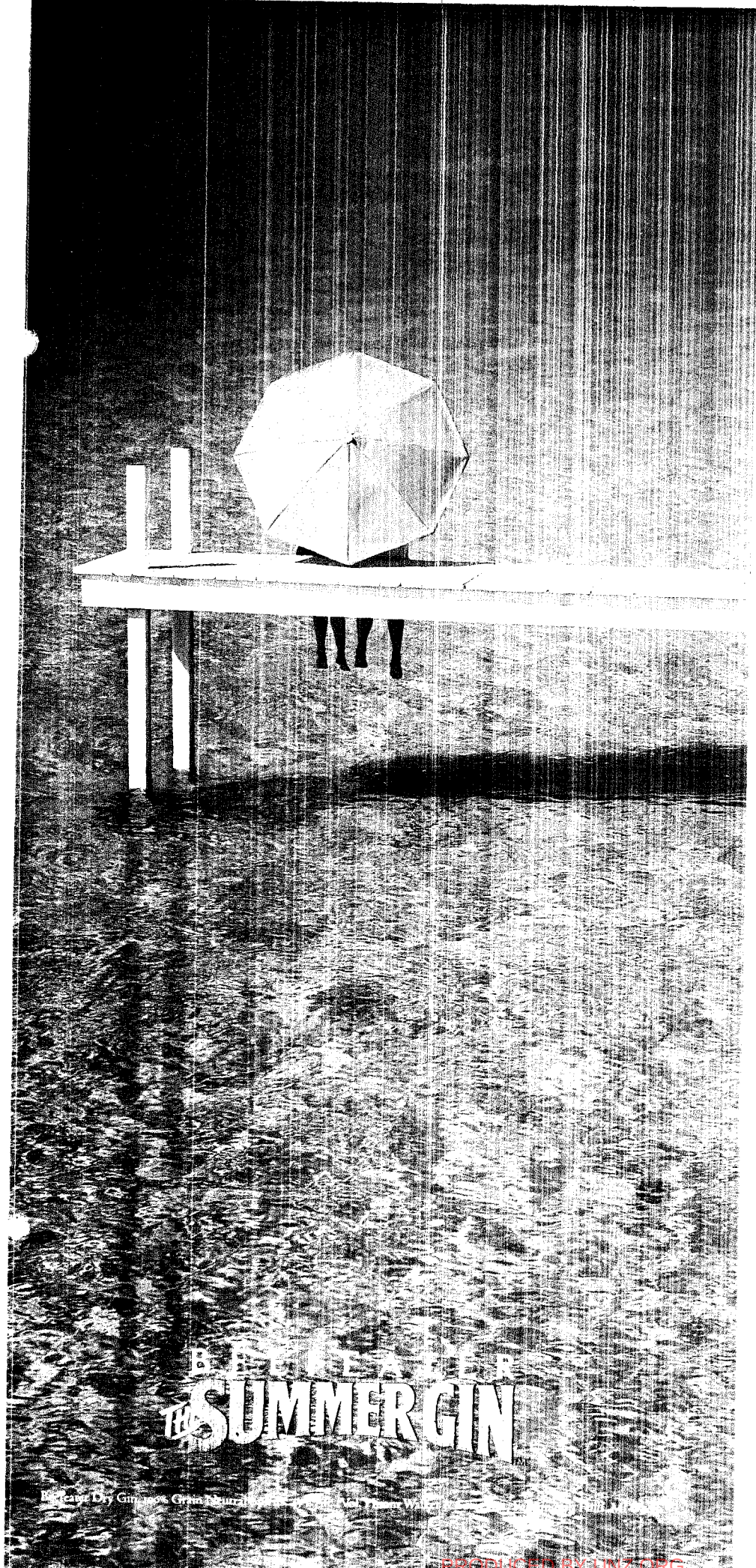
shore, were also available to the lower classes, although their weekend was usually shorter, extending from Saturday afternoon until Sunday evening.

According to one contemporary observer, Thomas Wright, "That the Saturday half-holiday movement is one of the most practically beneficial that has ever been inaugurated with a view to the social improvement of 'the masses,' no one who is acquainted with its workings will for a moment doubt." He approvingly described a variety of activities in which working people indulged on the Saturday half-holiday. The afternoon began with a leisurely midday meal at home, which was often followed by a weekly bath in the neighborhood bathhouse—an important institution at a time when few homes had running water, and one that was common in British and North American cities until well into the twentieth century. The rest of the daytime hours might be spent reading the paper, working around the house, attending a club, or strolling around town window-shopping. Saturday afternoon became a customary time for park concerts, soccer games, rowing, and bicycling—and, of course, drinking in the local pub, for despite the hopes of the reformers and Evangelicals, drinking was still the chief leisure pastime of the working classes, whether the holiday occurred on Saturday or on Monday.

Wright emphasized that the afternoon was usually brought to a close in time for tea at five o'clock, to leave plenty of time for the chief entertainment of the week. Saturday night was the time for an outing to the theater; most people brought their own food and drink into the cheap seats in the gallery. The music hall, an important influence on the spread of Saturday night's popularity, began as an adjunct to taverns but emerged as an independent entity in the 1840s, and continued to be prominent in British entertainment for the next eighty years.

This was not the elite leisure of the aristocracy and landed gentry, for whom recreations such as shooting and fox hunting had become an all-consuming way of life. Nor was it the traditional mixture of leisure and work among ordinary people. No longer were work and play interchanged at will; no longer did they occur in the same milieu. There was now a special time for leisure, as well as a special place. Being neither play as work nor work as play, middle-class leisure, which eventually infiltrated and influenced all of society, involved something new: the strict demarcation of a temporal and a physical boundary between leisure and work. These boundaries—exemplified by the weekend—more than anything else characterize modern leisure.

AFTER IT BECAME COMMON IN THE 1870S, THE BRITISH half-holiday took years to expand to a full day off. The American half-holiday didn't become common until the 1920s, but its expansion was more rapid. Often the weekend arrived in a full two-day configuration. The first factory to adopt a five-day week was a



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New England spinning mill, in 1908, expressly to accommodate its Jewish workers. The six-day week had always made it hard for Jews to observe the Sabbath, for if they took Saturday off and worked on Sunday, they risked offending the Christian majority. Moreover, as work patterns became increasingly formalized through union agreements, many Jews did not even have a choice, a state of affairs that threatened the Sabbath tradition. The five-day week—in which both Sunday and Saturday were holidays—offered a convenient way out, and it came to be supported by Jewish workers, rabbis, and community leaders, and some Jewish employers.

At first the five-day workweek was common in only three industries: the needle trade, building construction, and printing and publishing. In a few isolated cases employers voluntarily adopted the five-day week. The earliest and most notable of these was, curiously enough, Henry Ford, a staunch anti-unionist. In 1914 Ford reduced the daily hours in his plant from nine to eight; in

1926 he announced that henceforth his factories would also be closed all day Saturday. His rationale was that an increase in leisure time would support an increase in

consumer spending, not least on automobiles and automobile travel. This was a prescient view, for the weekend did indeed become associated with outings and pleasure trips. But in 1926 that was still in the future, and Ford was alone among businessmen in espousing the weekend. He was roundly criticized by U.S. Steel, Westinghouse, and the National Association of Manufacturers.

What finally consolidated the two-day weekend was not altruism or activism or, paradoxically, prosperity; it was the Great Depression of 1929. Shorter hours came to be regarded as a remedy for unemployment: each person would work less, but more people would have jobs.

Just before the Depression the workweek stood for many at close to fifty hours; later, as a result of work-sharing, it fell to thirty-five or less. Eventually the New Deal legislation embodied in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 mandated a weekly maximum of forty hours to begin in 1940, although the act was mute about the length of the workday. Once the eight-hour day became customary, the five-day week arrived.

The Promise of Leisure

THROUGHOUT THE 1920S AND 1930S DOZENS OF articles and books of a general nature were published by psychiatrists, psychologists, and social scientists on the perils of what was often called the New Leisure. There was a widespread feeling that the working class would not really know what to do with its increasing free time. The underlying theme was an old one: less work meant more leisure, more leisure led to idleness, and idle hands, as everyone knew, were ripe for Satan's mischief. This was precisely the argument advanced by the supporters of Prohibition, who maintained that shorter hours provided workers with more free time, which they would only squander on drink. Whatever the merits of this argument—and undoubtedly drinking was popular—one senses that this and other such "concerns" really masked an unwillingness to accept the personal freedom that was implicit in leisure. The pessimism of intellectuals about the ability of ordinary people to amuse themselves has always been profound, and never more so than when popular amusements do not accord with the intellectuals' notions of what constitutes a good time.

There were different views as to what people would do with their newfound freedom. Some economists hoped that the extra free time would spur consumption of leisure goods and stimulate the stagnant economy. Middle-class social reformers saw an opportunity for a program of na-



tional physical and intellectual self-improvement. The two goals of filling leisure time—the economic and the cultural—appeared to many to be incompatible. A 1930 article by Walter Lippmann, “Free Time and Extra Money,” in *Woman’s Home Companion*, articulated “the problem of leisure.” Lippmann warned that leisure offered individuals difficult choices, choices for which a work-oriented society like America had not prepared them. Lippmann was concerned that if people didn’t make creative use of their free time, it would be squandered on mass entertainments and commercial amusements. His views were among the most influential during a time when many books and articles of popular sociology were being published with titles such as *The Challenge of Leisure*, *The Threat of Leisure*, and even “The Menace of Leisure.”

Much of this concern was based on the widespread assumption that the amount of available free time was greater than ever before, and that the

ty hours. As Benjamin Hunnicutt, the author of *Work Without End*, observes, this marked the end of a century-long trend. On the strength of the evidence of the past fifty years it would appear that the trend has not only stopped but reversed. By 1948, 13 percent of Americans with full-time jobs worked more than forty-nine hours a week; by 1979 the figure had crept up to 18 percent. Ten years later the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that of 88 million Americans with full-time jobs fully 24 percent worked forty-nine or more hours a week.

Surveys of leisure habits often show diverging results. Two recent surveys, by the University of Maryland and by Michigan’s Survey Research Center, suggest that most Americans enjoy about thirty-nine hours of leisure time weekly. On the other hand, a 1988 survey conducted by the National Research Center of the Arts came to a very different conclusion. It found that “Americans report a median 16.6 hours of leisure time each week.” The truth is probably somewhere in between. Less surprising,



WHAT FINALLY CONSOLIDATED THE TWO-DAY WEEKEND WAS NOT ALTRUISM OR ACTIVISM OR, PARADOXICALLY, PROSPERITY; IT WAS THE GREAT DEPRESSION OF 1929.

“problem of leisure” was without precedent. Before the Depression an American working a fifty-hour week spent less than half of his 5,824 waking hours a year on the job—the rest was free time. In contrast, a hundred years earlier work had accounted for as much as two thirds of one’s waking hours. But, as Hannah Arendt has observed, this reduction is misleading, because the modern period is inevitably measured against the Industrial Revolution, which represented an all-time high as far as the number of working hours was concerned. A comparison with earlier periods of history leads to a different conclusion. The fourth-century Roman, for example, with 200 annual public holidays, spent fewer than a third of his waking hours at work; in medieval Europe, religious festivals reduced the work year to well below the modern level of 2,000 hours. Indeed, until the eighteenth century, Europeans and Americans enjoyed *more* free time than they do today. The American worker of the 1930s was just catching up.

But not for long. Working hours bottomed out during the Depression and then started to rise. Job creation, not work-sharing, became the goal of the New Deal. The Fair Labor Standards Act provided for a workweek of for-

given the number of people working more than forty-nine hours a week, was the National Research Center’s conclusion that most Americans have suffered a decline in weekly leisure of 9.6 hours over the past fifteen years. The nineteenth-century activists who struggled so hard for a shorter workweek and more free time would have been taken aback by this statistic: what happened to the “Eight Hours for What We Will”?

There are undoubtedly people who work longer hours out of personal ambition, to escape problems at home, or from compulsion. The term “workaholic” (a post-war Americanism) is recent, but addiction to work is not—Thomas Jefferson, for example, was a compulsive worker, as was G. K. Chesterton—and there is no evidence that there are more such people today than there were in the past. Of course, for many people longer hours are not voluntary—they have to work more merely to make ends meet. This was particularly true in the 1980s, when poverty in America began to increase, but because the shrinking of leisure time began during the prosperous 1960s, economic need isn’t the only explanation.

Twenty years ago Staffan Linder, a Swedish econo-



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New York, N.Y.
September 27 • February 21*

Located in a 272-year-old mansion, Fraunces Tavern is the oldest continuously operated restaurant in the United States. Samuel Fraunces, later to be chief provisioning of the Continental Army, opened the tavern in 1762, and everyone who was anyone in Colonial America frequented it; Alexander Hamilton had his own corner table. Today the tavern's restaurant regularly serves dishes made according to recipes from the Revolutionary era and also hosts a variety of culinary special events. On September 27 Chef Tom Miner will serve a traditional Manhattan "Turtle Feast." November 11 to 15 the tavern will re-create the victory banquet that Samuel Fraunces served General Washington and his troops. Other special menus will be served on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and the week of Washington's birthday. Thanksgiving dinner costs \$36.50; other menus are priced à la carte. Reservations are necessary for Thanksgiving (make them several weeks in advance) and are recommended for other days. The restaurant is open weekdays year-round for lunch and dinner. For reservations: Fraunces Tavern, 54 Pearl St., New York, NY 10004; (212) 269-0144.

"DINNER IN A COUNTRY VILLAGE"

*Old Sturbridge Village,
Sturbridge, Mass.
October 19 • March 28*

For this series of Saturday-evening dinners Old Sturbridge Village, a historically accurate rural community that fills more than 40



buildings, invites visitors to step back 160 years into a New England kitchen, don an apron, and join in the cooking. Participants use period recipes and cooking techniques in helping costumed historical interpreters to prepare their meal: fish chowder, fricassee of parsnips, roasted leg of lamb, chicken pie, and potato pudding, among other dishes. After dinner everyone retires to the parlor to play Conundrums, hear a story, and sing songs in front of the fire. The price for the evening is \$50. Reservations are required (make them a few months in advance). For reservations: Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA 01566; (508) 347-3362.

"HEARTH-SIDE SUPPERS"

*Conner Prairie, Noblesville, Ind.
January 3 • March 29*

The year is 1836, Andrew Jackson is President, and dinner awaits at the home of Hoosier statesman William Conner—except, as at Old Sturbridge Village, the diners must first help to prepare it. Conner Prairie is a living-history museum near Indianapolis, and its toothsome dinner

is followed by 19th-century parlor games and a tour of Conner's 1823 Federal-style brick home. The evening costs \$35 on weeknights and \$40 on weekends. Reservations are required (and need to be made months in advance). For reservations: Conner Prairie, 13400 Allisonville Rd., Noblesville, IN 46060; (317) 776-6000.

"SHAKER VILLAGE BY CANDLELIGHT"

*The Creamery at Shaker Village, Canterbury, N.H.
Weekends year-round*

Canterbury Shaker Village, chartered in 1792, was the seventh Shaker community established in America and is one of two remaining in which Shakers still live. On Friday and Saturday evenings Chef Jeffrey Paige welcomes visitors to the village's former creamery for this dinner series. Using recipes from the Shaker archives and fresh herbs and locally grown ingredients, Paige interprets Shaker cooking as taught to him by the eldresses. The result: an ever-changing menu of "the oldest new-American cooking." Depending on the season, dinner is followed by a

candlelight tour of the village or folk music in the wood-stove-warmed schoolhouse. The price for the four-course meal is \$32. Reservations are required (make them at least a week in advance). The Creamery is also open every day (except January 1–February 13) for lunch and Sundays for brunch. For reservations: The Creamery at Canterbury Shaker Village, 288 Shaker Rd., Canterbury, NH 03224; (603) 783-9511.

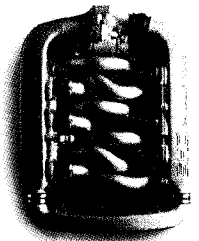
WILD WEST DINNERS

*The Fort, Morrison, Colo.
Year-round*

Up in the red-rock hills 18 miles southwest of Denver, the Fort is 157 proud years behind the times. This full-size adobe replica of Bent's Fort, Colorado's first fur-trading post—complete with a 27-star American flag and a canvas tepee lined with buffalo robes (available for small parties)—contains an award-winning restaurant that serves the greatest quantity and largest variety of buffalo of any restaurant in the world. Besides buffalo steak, marrow, hump, and tongue, the menu includes quail eggs, elk, rattlesnake, and "Rocky Mountain oysters"—not to mention shrimp, chicken, and beef. When patrons order champagne to wash any or all of this down, the waiter lops open the bottle with a tomahawk. As if the food weren't entertainment enough, a strolling mountain man spins yarns and the owner, Sam Arnold, often plays his musical saw or mandolin. A typical dinner costs \$30 (or its equivalent in bartered beaver pelts). The Fort is open year-round for dinner; reservations are recommended. For reservations: The Fort, 19192 Route 8, Morrison, CO 80465; (303) 697-4771.



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mist, wrote a book whose thesis was that economic growth caused an increasing scarcity of time, and that statistics showing an increase in personal incomes did not necessarily mean growing well-being. Linder observed that with increased productivity came the possibility of shorter work hours and a wider availability of consumer goods. People had a choice: more "leisure" time or more consumption. Only the wealthy could have both. If the average person wanted to indulge in expensive recreation like skiing or sailing, or to buy expensive entertainment equipment, it would be necessary to work more—to trade free time for overtime or a second job. Whether because of the effectiveness of advertising or from simple acquisitiveness, most people chose consumption over time. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, in 1989 Americans spent more than \$13 billion on sports clothing; put another way, more than a billion hours of potential leisure time were exchanged for leisure wear—for increasingly elaborate running shoes, certified hiking shorts, and monogrammed warm-up suits. In 1989, to pay for these indulgences, more workers than ever before recorded—6.2 percent—held two or more jobs.

There is no contradiction between the surveys that indicate a reversing trend, resulting in a loss of free time, and the claim that the weekend dominates our leisure. Longer work hours and more overtime cut mainly into weekday leisure. So do longer commutes, driving the kids, and Friday-night shopping. The weekend—or what's left of it after Saturday household chores—is when we have time to relax.

But the weekend has imposed a rigid schedule on our free time, which can result in a sense of urgency

("soon it will be Monday") that is at odds with relaxation. The weekly rush to the cottage is not leisurely, nor is the compression of various recreational activities into the two-day break. The freedom to do anything has become the obligation to do something, just as Chesterton foretold, and the list of dutiful recreations includes strenuous disciplines intended for self-improvement (fitness exercises, jogging, bicycling), competitive sports (tennis, golf), and skill-testing pastimes (sailing, skiing).

Recreations like tennis and sailing are hardly new, but before the arrival of the weekend they were for most people chiefly seasonal activities. Once a year, when vacation time came around, tennis rackets were removed from the back of the cupboard, swimwear was taken out of mothballs, or skis were dusted off. The accent was less on technique than on having a good time. It was like playing Monopoly at the summer cottage: no one remembered all the rules, but everyone could still enjoy the game. Now the availability of free time every weekend has changed this casual attitude. The very frequency of weekend recreations allows continual participation and improvement, which encourages the development of proficiency and skill.

The desire to do something well, whether it is sailing a boat or building a boat, reflects a need that was previously met in the workplace. Competence was shown on the job—holidays were for messing around. Now the situation is reversed. Technology has removed craft from most occupations. This is true in assembly-line jobs, where almost no training or experience, hence no skill, is required, as well as in most service positions (store clerks, fast-food attendants), where the only talent required is to smile and say "Have a good day." But it's also true in such skill-dependent work as house construction, where the majority of parts come ready-made from the factory and the carpenter merely assembles them, or automobile repair, which consists largely in replacing one throwaway part with another. Nor is the reduction of skills limited to

manual work. Memory, once the prerequisite skill of the white-collar worker, has been rendered superfluous by computers; teachers, who once needed dramatic skills, now depend on mechanical aids; in politics, oratory has been killed by the thirty-second sound bite.

Hence an unexpected development in the history of leisure: for many people weekend free time has become not a chance to escape work



IS IT FANCIFUL TO PROPOSE THAT THE REPETITIVE CYCLE OF WEEK AND WEEKEND IS A MODERN PARAPHRASE OF THE ANCIENT OPPOSITION OF PROFANE AND SACRED TIME?

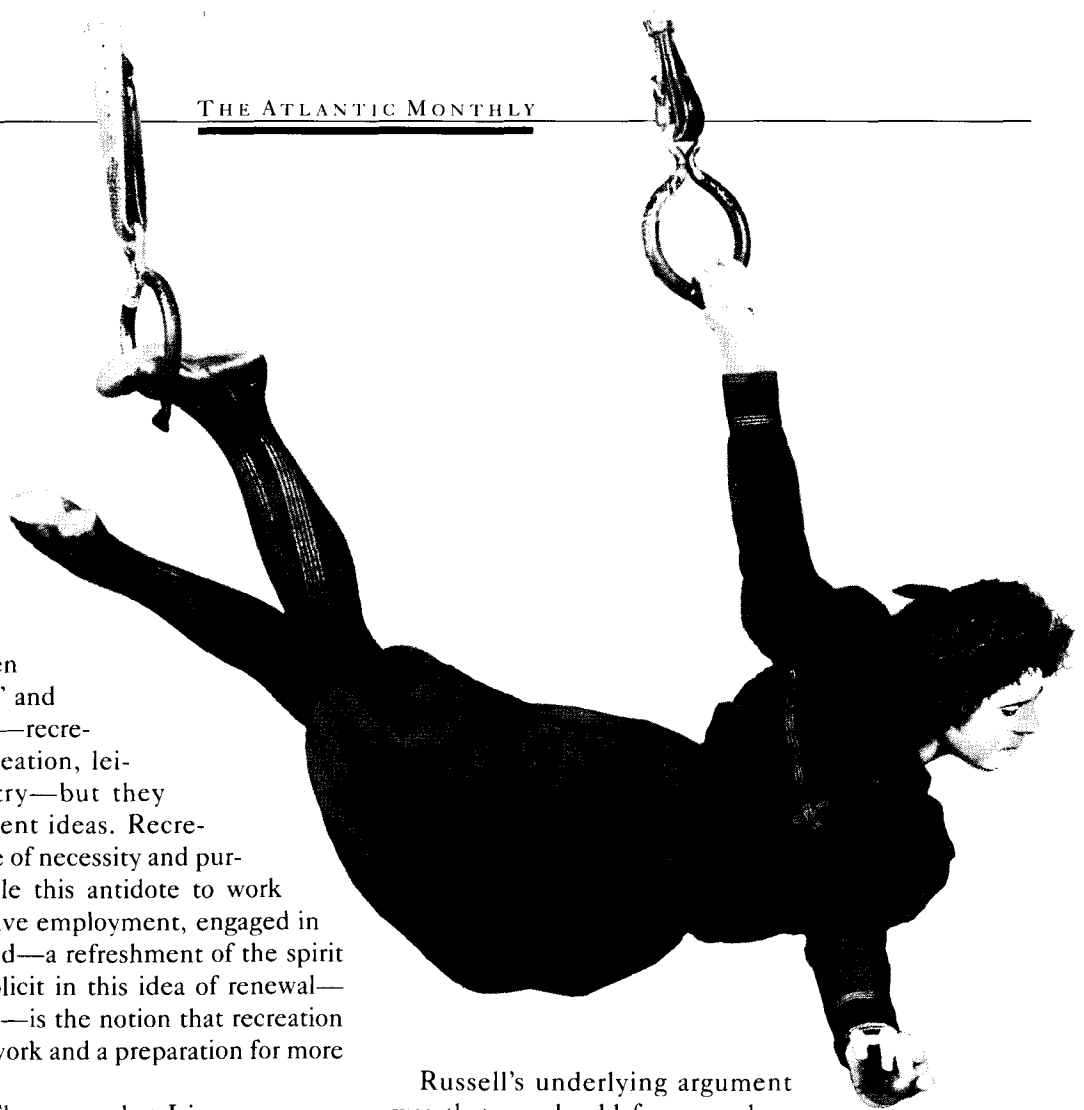
but a chance to create work that is more meaningful—to work at recreation—in order to realize the personal satisfactions that the workplace no longer offers.

Sacred Time

“LEISURE” IS the most misunderstood word in our vocabulary. We often use the words “recreation” and “leisure” interchangeably—recreation room, rest and recreation, leisure suit, leisure industry—but they really embody two different ideas. Recreation carries with it a sense of necessity and purpose. However pleasurable this antidote to work may be, it is a form of active employment, engaged in with a specific end in mind—a refreshment of the spirit or the body or both. Implicit in this idea of renewal—usually organized renewal—is the notion that recreation is both a consequence of work and a preparation for more of it.

Leisure is different. That was what Lippmann was getting at when he contrasted commercial recreation with individual leisure. Leisure is not tied to work the way that recreation is; leisure is self-contained. The root of the word is the Latin *licere*, which means “to be permitted,” suggesting that leisure is about freedom. But freedom for what? When Chesterton said “doing nothing,” he was describing not emptiness but an occasion for reflection and contemplation, a chance to look inward rather than outward.

Bertrand Russell placed leisure in a larger historical context in his essay “In Praise of Idleness.” “Leisure is essential to civilization,” he wrote, “and in former times leisure for the few was only rendered possible by the labours of the many. But their labours were valuable, not because work is good, but because leisure is good.” Russell, a member of the aristocracy, pointed out that it had been precisely the leisure classes, not the laborers, who had written books, invented philosophies, produced the sciences, and cultivated the arts. But he was not arguing for a continuation of the class system; on the contrary, he proposed extending to the many the leisure that had previously been reserved for the few. This was an explicit attack on the work ethic, which he considered a device to trick people into accepting a life without leisure. In his view, the trick hadn’t succeeded; working men and women had no illusions about work—they understood that it was merely a necessary means to a livelihood.



Russell’s underlying argument was that we should free ourselves from the guilt about leisure that modern society had imposed on us through the use of terms such as “idleness” and “doing nothing,” which were intended as a provocation to a society that placed the highest value on “keeping busy.” Both Russell and Chesterton agreed with Aristotle, who considered leisure the aim of life. “We work,” he wrote, “to have leisure.”

“IN PRAISE OF IDLENESS” WAS WRITTEN IN 1932, AT the height of the Depression, and Russell’s proposal for a four-hour workday appears hopelessly utopian now. But the weekend’s later and sudden popularity in so many societies suggests that leisure is beginning to make a comeback, although not as fully as Russell desired, not in so relaxed a way as Chesterton would have wished.

I cannot shake the suspicion that something more than mere functionality accounts for the widespread popularity of the weekend. Can its universal appeal be explained by a resonance with some ancient inclination buried deep in the human psyche? Given the mythological roots of the planetary week, and the devotional nature of Sunday and the Sabbath, the answer is likely to be found in early religious attitudes.

Mircea Eliade, a historian of religion, characterized traditional premodern societies as experiencing the world in two distinct ways corresponding to two discontinuous

modes of being: the sacred and the profane. According to Eliade, the sacred manifested itself in various ways—how physical space was perceived, for example. The profane, chaotic world, full of menace, was given structure and purpose by the existence of fixed, meaningful sacred places. Not only space but also time was thus perceived. Profane time was ordinary temporal duration, but sacred time, the time of festivals and holy days, was primordial and mythical, and stood apart from everyday life. During sacred time the clock not only stopped, it was turned back. The purpose of religious rites was precisely to reintegrate the past into the present. In this way sacred time became part of a separate, repetitive continuum, an “eternal mythical present.”

Is it fanciful to propose that the repetitive cycle of week and weekend is a modern paraphrase of the ancient opposition of profane and sacred time? Obviously, the weekend is not a historical remnant in any literal sense, since it didn’t even exist until the nineteenth century and its emergence was in response to specific social and economic conditions. Nor am I suggesting that the secular weekend is a substitute for religious festivals, although it is obviously linked to religious observance. However, there are several striking parallels.

Weekday time, like profane time, is linear. It represents an irreversible progression of days, Monday to Friday, year after year. Past weekday time is lost time. School days are followed by workdays, the first job by the second and the third. Not only is weekday time linear but, like profane time, it encompasses the unpredictable. During the week unforeseen things happen. People get promoted or fired. Stock markets soar or crash. Politicians are elected or voted out of office. One has the impression that history occurs on weekdays.

The weekend, on the other hand, is, in the words of Plato, a time to take a breath. It is a time apart from the world of mundane problems and mundane concerns, from the world of making a living. On weekends time stands still, and not only because we take off our watches. Just as holidays at the beach are an opportunity to recreate our childhood, to build sand castles with the kids, to paddle in the surf, to lie on the sand and get a sunburn, many of the things we do on weekends correspond to the things we did on weekends past. Weekend time shares this sense of reenactment with sacred time, and just as sacred time was characterized by ritual, the weekend, despite being an opportunity for personal freedom, is governed by convention: mowing the lawn, grilling steaks on the barbecue, going to the movies, Saturday night out, reading the Sunday paper, brunch, the afternoon opera broadcast, weekend drives, garage sales, and

weekend visits. The predictability of the weekend is one of its comforts.

Free time has always been partly a refuge from labor. The weekend, too, is a retreat from work, but in a different way: a retreat from the abstract and the universal to the local and the particular. In that sense leisure is likely to continue to be, as Pieper claimed, the basis of culture. Every culture chooses a different structure for its work and leisure, and in doing so it makes a profound statement about itself. It invents, adapts, and recombines new and old models. Hence the long list of leisure days: public festivals, family celebrations, market days, taboo days, evil days, holy days, feasts, Saint Mondays and Saint Tuesdays, commemorative holidays, summer vacations—and weekends.

The weekend is our own contribution, our way of dealing with the ancient duality. The institution of the weekend reflects the many unresolved contradictions in modern attitudes toward leisure. We want to have our cake and eat it too. We want the freedom to be leisurely, but we want it regularly, every week, like clockwork.

The attraction of Saint Monday was that one could “go fishing” whenever one willed; the regularity of the weekend—every five days—is at odds with the ideas of personal freedom and spontaneity. There is something mechanical about this oscillation, which creates a sense of obligation that interferes with leisure. Like sacred time, the weekend is comfortingly repetitive, but the conventionality of weekend free time, which must exist side by side with private pastimes and idiosyncratic hobbies, often appears to be restrictive. “What did you do on the weekend?” “The usual,” we answer, mixing dismay with relief.

We have invented the weekend, but the dark cloud of old taboos still hangs over the holiday, and the combination of the secular with the holy leaves us uneasy. This tension only compounds the guilt that many of us continue to feel about not working, and leads to the nagging feeling that our free time should be used for some purpose higher than having fun. We want leisure, but we are afraid of it too.

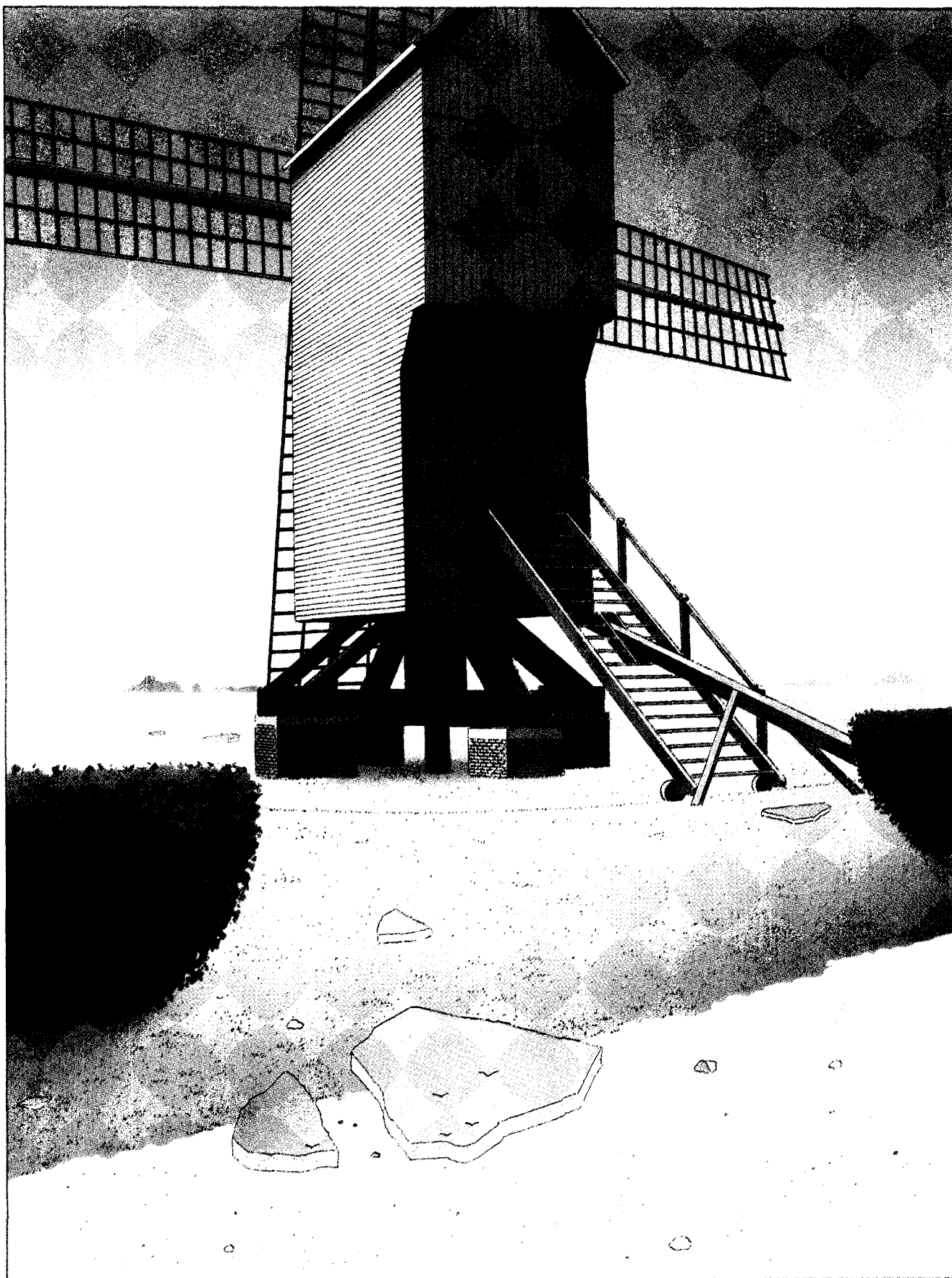
Do we work to have leisure, or the other way around? Unsure of the answer, we have decided to keep the two separate. If C. P. Snow had not already used the term in another context, it would be tempting to speak of Two Cultures. We pass weekly from one to the other—from the mundane, communal, increasingly impersonal, increasingly demanding, increasingly bureaucratic world of work to the reflective, private, controllable, consoling world of leisure. The weekend: our own and not our own, it is what we wait for all week long. □

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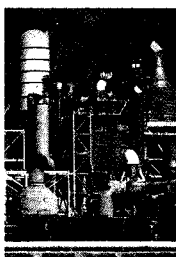
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HEADROOM

BY GUY BILLOUT



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A Short Story



Grace

by Robbie Clipper Sethi

SHE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT HER MARRIAGE of convenience would be anything but. She had seduced him easily enough. Their love affair was all a big cliché: they'd met at a party near the University of Pennsylvania campus; he was one of the few people there who cared anything about design, perspective, the re-creation of life in two dimensions; she had asked him if he'd care to see her paintings.

He liked her geometric heads, their crossed eyes and twisted lips. "I wanted to study photography," he said, "but we were middle class."

"We're middle class." Worse: her father worked the line at Campbell's Soup.

"In India only the rich can take a chance on not making money." He had come to Wharton for an M.B.A.

"I can't support myself with this," Grace said. She was looking for an assistant professorship; meanwhile, she was waiting tables, which paid more than part-time teaching.

In some ways marrying a well-paid man seemed easier than supporting herself, as long as he was willing to spend his salary on paint and canvases, and save Grace the time she would otherwise have had to waste taking orders, wiping tables, and picking up tips.

Living together might have been enough if she had known what to call him:

"boyfriend" seemed too immature, and when she referred to her "lover," everyone assumed that she was living with a woman, so thoroughly had homosexuals appropriated the term.

Her parents didn't like the obvious cohabitation without papers, but they had spent all their lives avoiding conflict; they went out of their way not to mention marriage. "What is he," her mother asked, "a Hindu?"

Her father said, "At least he's not a Catholic."

When Inder finished his degree, his parents and his sister wrote him letters asking him to come back and "settle down" with "a good girl of your own choice."

"That means they're finding me a wife," he said.

"Don't they know about me?"

"Are you kidding? They don't even know I've given up the turban, or shaved my beard! They'd be over here in a minute, trying to persuade me that I'd been seduced, that you were only interested in my money."

"You have been seduced," she said, "and your money is keeping me out of the bars six nights a week."

"I can't go anyway," he said. "Immigration would never let me back."

They were married in city hall, the statue of tolerant, immigrant William Penn standing over them. They didn't dare tell Grace's parents. Only after Inder was sure that he could get back into the country did he write a letter to his mother and father:

I am planning a trip to India in January. I have met someone I very much respect. I would like to bring her with me to meet the family, according to your wishes.

With highest respect, your loving son,

Inder Singh

*Her husband's parents had
come from India to visit the newlyweds,
and now they wouldn't leave*

The first call came in three weeks: Inder's mother was ill, he had to come right away; his father was weak, only God could say whether he would live to see his son again; his sister shouted so loud that Grace could hear her voice across the room.

In the end they got on a plane together, watched four movies, ate five meals,

and leafed through every magazine in the racks.

At the airport Inder's mother clung to his neck and wailed while big tears disappeared into his father's beard. Until they could pry his mother off him and lead her to the taxi—hordes of people were watching this display—Inder's sister crushed Grace in her fleshy arms. Grace was glad her parents had not had the money to come and be on hand to witness this display of excessive emotion.

Days passed on the string cots and jute mats in the courtyard of Inder's parents' house. His mother shouted in Punjabi while Inder sat, hardly reacting, on one of the steel-and-linoleum chairs of their dinette set.

"My brother was so handsome with the turban and the beard," his sister said. "Bibiji and Darji cannot accept."

Inder's uncles came, their wives, their grown-up sons. Everybody had something to say, mostly in Punjabi.

Grace finally saw Inder alone, on his way out of the bathroom, which was separated from the house by the open courtyard. "What's going on?" she asked.

"We're getting married."

"Here you are!" his sister said, walking across the courtyard. "I've been looking all over for you."

Grace wore one of Inder's sister's saris, rose silk embroidered with silver marigolds, wrapped around her own black leotard. She stood before a crowd of people in their temple and heard a bearded priest say something like her name—Ga-race Mad-i-son. Then she and Inder walked four times around the holy book and stood under a shower of flowers, the like of which were used to decorate their marriage bed, the only double in the house.

"This is the first time I've been alone with you the whole trip," Grace said.

"We've got our whole lives to be alone," he said.

She didn't see much of India, either. She got up to the smell of dung smoke every morning, the sound of vegetable hawkers and prayers. She sat in the courtyard and sketched the sunlight coloring the cement walls of the house. "What are you drawing?" people asked, and they looked from her sketch pad to the walls and back again.

"We would have had the whole house painted," her father-in-law said, "but you gave so little notice."

She dressed in brilliant skirts, saris, or baggy pants, rode taxis through streets teeming with oranges, golds, yellows, and reds, and then slept for an hour or two. Inder's sister would wake them up, saying that it was time to visit some relative.

She couldn't wait to get home.

Back in the bigger and sunnier bedroom of their new two-bedroom apartment, she painted the evil eyes of peacock feathers, the stripes of the Bengal tiger. She framed the batiks and Rajasthani paintings she had bought, and painted Philadelphia girls, their breasts bulging out of midriff tops.

Inder let her paint. He was the only man who had ever let her paint. Other men had interfered, tried to finish

the paintings for her, tried to outpaint her. Inder told her what he thought only when she asked for it.

"This is the most productive summer I have ever had," she said.

IN THE FALL HIS MOTHER CAME. SHE CLEANED the apartment every day, from time to time bursting in on Grace with a handful of corner dust for her inspection. In the afternoons she sat behind Grace, coughing every time Grace opened a tube of paint. Toward evening she banged pots loudly. The smell of cooking oil seeped into Grace's oil paints.

Grace watched, speechless. Unlike Inder's sister and father, his mother spoke no English, and Grace was far too busy painting to learn Punjabi. The closest language to it that she could have studied was Hindi-Urdu, and the University of Pennsylvania was so expensive that she couldn't afford to take the course anyway.

"Why doesn't your mother go home?" she asked. "Two months is long enough to visit anyone."

"She has a four-month visa," Inder said.

"I can't take another two months!"

"I can't tell her to leave. In India a parent is always welcome."

"But this is not India!"

"She doesn't care about that. I'm her only son. She wants to make sure I'm well settled."

"Well, tell her. You're very well settled. She can go home and get on with her own life."

"She will. She's worried, anyway, about my father and sister."

And she did go home, but not until six months later, after her visa had been extended for four more months.



ANOTHER SUMMER, AND GRACE PAINTED folds of fabric, cascading hair, the sun on russet skin. She and Inder bought a house and made love on the screened porch, waking to the songs of birds. "This is even better than last summer," Grace said, and she wished it could go on

forever, but just as the nights were turning cold, Bibiji came back, with Inder's father.

"I cannot live alone," he said. "I am infirm."

"What is he talking about?" Grace asked. "They live with your sister."

"He's retired," Inder said. "His pension won't even pay the taxes, let alone the bills, and in India you don't take money from your daughter. People say you're stealing from her dowry."

"Your sister's forty-four years old!"

"They tried for fifteen years to have me," Inder said. "When my father lost the business, Behanji had to go to work. Her dowry went to pay for my school."

"You already stole from her dowry! Are you saying this is it? They're here to stay?"

"Of course not. They're happy in India."

In the mornings, after Inder went to work, Grace would go downstairs for her coffee. Her father-in-law always joined her at the table. Her mother-in-law went right on cleaning. One morning her mother-in-law shouted from the family room, where she was on her hands and knees, dusting the floor.

"Bibiji wants a baby," her father-in-law said, almost blushing.

"Isn't she a little old?" Grace asked.

He laughed. "Not hers," he said. "She is impatient for a grandson to carry on the name."

"It's your name," Grace said.

She told Inder, in the bathroom, the only place she could get to him alone when he came home from work, "If I thought you wanted babies, I wouldn't have tied you down with me."

"What are you talking about?" he said. "I don't want babies."

"Well, your mother does."

"Of course she does. She has no other chance for grandchildren, and in India children are everything. Don't you remember all the jokes my aunts made about American grandchildren?"

"I couldn't understand your aunts. Do you want babies?"

"I don't know," he said. "I've never thought about it."

"Because if you do, you never should have married me. If I had a baby, I'd never get any work done. Even now I can't concentrate on a simple sketch with them shouting at each other—"

"What do you want me to do? I can't tell my parents what to do."

"But you can tell your wife she can't live the way she wants to in her own house."

"You can do anything you want," he said. "I've never told you what to do. Have I? Have I?"

She had to admit that he never had.

"It's only temporary, Grace. A few more months." She tried to turn away. "Grace? Please let me handle this. I just don't want to hurt them."

She stuffed her ears with wax, couldn't even hear when Darji knocked on the door. He would come upstairs to the third bedroom and stand behind her, for how long she never knew. She'd turn, jump, sometimes let out a little scream, which he would return, and Bibiji would shout from the kitchen. He would tell Grace, every day, "We have no milk, no eggs. What are you cooking for dinner?"

When Inder came home, she would corner him in the bathroom. "They're mature adults. Why can't they get their own groceries?"

"They can't drive."

"Teach them."

"Me teach my father how to drive? He never even drove in India."

"This is not India."

"They'll only be here for a few more months," Inder said. "If they need groceries, I can buy them on the way home."

She could never get them to complain to him directly. Darji would wait until Inder had gone off to work. "Your mother-in-law is not feeling well," he'd say. "She must see a doctor."

"What's wrong?" she asked—once. After that she learned.

"Some pains in the neck," her father-in-law said.

"Have you mentioned this to Inder?"

"She does not want to worry her son."

She took them to a doctor she had confided in when she was still supporting herself serving double scotches to medical students. Darji translated Bibiji's complaints; then he told the doctor about his own muscle pains, fatigue, indigestion, confusion with the fast talk on the television.

"Get a little exercise," Joel said. "Your wife, too. Walk an hour every day."

"We cannot walk," Darji said. "Our legs are weak."

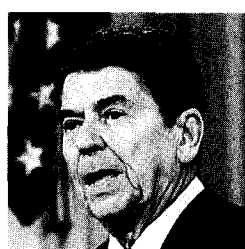
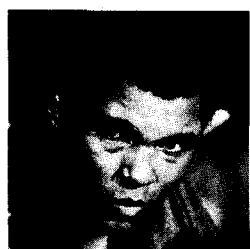
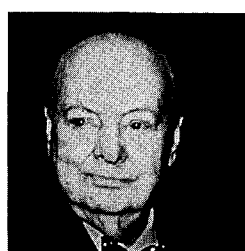
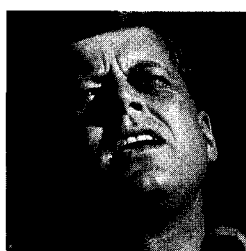
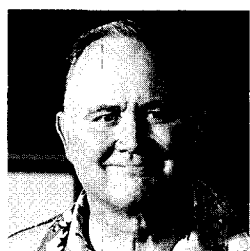
Joel sent them out into the waiting room. "I could order tests," he told Grace, "but my suspicion is it's arthritis, lack of exercise, old age. And tests can be expensive. Do they have insurance?"

"I don't know." She felt like crying—if only Joel had specialized in psychiatry.

"Yo," he said. "Where's the Grace who used to get me drunk? Professionally speaking, that is." She had to leave, she knew it. He had other patients. Besides, she scared herself with a sudden urge to rub her face against the auburn stubble on his pasty cheek.

On the way home Darji asked if they could do a little shopping. With whose money, Grace wondered. She had just dropped sixty bucks for their medical hallucinations. Their very presence in her Japanese subcompact depressed her—Darji on the seat beside her with his turban pressed against the roof, Bibiji in the back in her polyester pantaloons and 1940s dress. Even the Philadelphia boys in their tight black pants and tank tops made her

Get involved in someone else's life.



BIOGRAPHY
Tuesdays 8pm ET/9pm PT



want to stop the car, get out, and hang out on the corner. She was, she realized with a touch of alarm, beginning to prefer her own kind.

Grace had never been able to approach a conflict with anything more flammable than paint, but arguing with Inder had given her practice. "Darji," she said, "why don't I enroll you in a driving school, so you don't have to keep asking me to take Bibiji shopping?"

"I cannot drive," he said. "My legs are too short!" The old man's eyes filled with tears, and he shouted, his voice breaking, "It is for the children to care for the old. What is time to them? We have little time left. How much trouble can it be to take your Bibiji and Darji to the shopping center so we will have some time outside our stinking, paint-smelling house?"

Grace tore home, left them in the driveway, and backed out again to scream at the highway. "The bastard! It's bad enough I was stupid enough to marry one man. Now I have to deal with two. Who is he to expect me to walk him around the local mall? How does he know how much time I have? I wouldn't put it past him to outlive me!"

When she came home in the evening, they were sitting in front of the television, watching a situation comedy with a laugh track so loud that Grace could hear it even before she touched the doorknob. Darji turned around, a smile stretched across his face. "Hello, daughter!" he shouted. "Did you buy the milk? Potatoes? Cooking oil?"

She found Inder in the bathroom. "Send a letter to your sister," she said. "Tell her that we just can't take it anymore. She has to take them back."

"I can't say that!"

"Well, you'll have to say something. I drive around for hours not wanting to come home and face the noise, the demands, the expectations. When does their visa run out?"

"It doesn't matter. They've applied for permanent residency."

"What? They can't stay here! Are you crazy?"

"It's not to stay here. It's just so they can come back any time without being hassled by Immigration."

"I'm not sure I want them to come back any time."

"They won't," Inder said. "They're bored. That's why they have so many aches and pains. Do you think they like being dependent on us?"

"I don't know what they like," Grace said. "Except for afternoon TV, shopping, and—oh, yes—babies."

"It's hard for them," Inder said. "Everyone they know is dying."

"It's hard for me," Grace said. "I'm dying—"

"Don't say that!"

"I'm dying, you're dying, we're all dying!"

He put his arms around her. "Don't even say it. If I ever lose you, I'll lose everything."

She wanted to believe it. She even thought she wanted to have his baby—some day, when she'd done enough work, had enough success. His arms still felt good. Even with his parents downstairs, he was sexy, dark like the Philadelphia boys, but different—educated, on his way to wealth, exotic.

"I need a place to work," Grace said. "I'm going to have to rent a studio."

"How much will that cost? They'll be here for only a few more months."



AFTER ANOTHER month he finally sent the letter. His sister answered it by telephone, collect. "What? You have the whole house to yourself," Inder said.

And his sister said all the rest: she was bankrupt; the house was a mess; she had nothing to repair it with, so she had rented it to Uncleji, who had moved in with a woman of a different caste and questionable morals; Bibiji had told her that Inder had three bedrooms, air-conditioning; she had no place to go; she had no husband, no children of her own. She threatened to commit suicide if she could not see her mother and father again, her brother and his wife.

They put her in the third bedroom. Grace moved her canvases into the basement. While she carried a still life down the stairs, Inder's sister stood in the doorway, apologizing. "Do not worry. When you start your family, I will sleep in the room with the baby. When he cries, I will get up and bring him to you in the bed."

"I can't stand this," Grace told Inder. "We've got to get them an apartment."

"Behanji will go back," he said. "She'll never be able to live without doing business, and this country operates so differently from India, she'll never get a job."

But she stayed for weeks, months. She sat up all hours with her mother, sobbing. "When are they going to take her back?" Grace asked. "I thought Bibiji wanted to go back and kick her brother out of the house."

"It's difficult to get rid of a tenant in India," Inder said, "especially if the tenant is a relative. Besides, none of them have an income."

"Well, send them cashier's checks," she said. "I'm looking for a job. At a college or a school—where I can use the studio. I can't work in this house anymore."

"Anyone will hire you," Inder said. "Your stuff is ten times better than it's ever been."

"I haven't painted in weeks."

"It hasn't been that bad, has it? You can paint in the basement."

Inder put track lights in the basement, his father supervising. The effort was wasted. Her colors came out wrong. The dampness warped the canvases. She bought a dehumidifier. The noise helped to drown out the TV, the floorboards groaning under Behanji's weight, Bibiji's shouting from the kitchen. The smell of onions, spices, and simmering meat drifted down the steps every day.

Still she tried to paint. She'd trace a perfect jawline, dead set on re-creating that face in her mind.

Behanji would knock on the door. "Am I disturbing you?"

Grace would hold the image just behind her eyes. Unlocking the door, she'd tell Behanji, "Yes. Later. I can't."

"One second," she'd say. "Mummy is afraid you will ruin your eyes, so I have ground up almonds with milk. You must drink it. I will bring it to you. I will not disturb you. One second only."

"Okay, put it there." She would go back to her canvas.

"I will, only you must drink it. Mummy told me, 'Make sure she drinks her milk,' and I must. She worries. Even I worry."

It would be hours before Grace could even think of that face again, and by then the jaw was ruined.

She spent the night, whenever she ran out of tolerance, with her parents. They were no help. "Those Indians," her father said, "they're just like the Italians. One of them gets over here, they bring the whole family."

Grace's ancestors, a hundred years ago, had each come over from Europe alone, forgetting even the countries they came from.

"Why don't you get them an apartment?" her mother said. "How old is Inder's sister? They're hiring at the K-mart."

"In India," Grace said, "it's just not done."

She sent résumés to every college and private school

within a hundred-mile radius. Sometimes she wondered why she didn't look for schools a thousand miles away.

"When you're working full time," Inder said, "it won't be all that bad. You won't have to come home until the evening, and they're all in bed by nine."

"I've got a better idea: why don't we blow my first three months' pay on three one-way tickets?"

"It's not the money. If it was the money, they would leave. Grace, you've got to get used to them living with us."

"Can you get used to them living with us?"

"They're my family! Behanji gave up her life to send me to school."

"To study something you didn't particularly want," she reminded him. "In America you give up your family to take a wife. I thought you could do that."

"I did do that."

"No," Grace said. "No."

WITH A FULL-TIME SALARY AT LAST, SHE had enough to rent a studio across the river, in the city they had moved away from when they needed the room that Inder's family had filled. She set her easel in front of a long, bare window overlooking the street, and furnished the room with chairs and tables she found by the curbs on her way to work. She bought a mattress for one corner; then she went out and bought sheets, a comforter, and two feather pillows. Her own bed, filling up one corner of the room, scared her, but she lay on it and almost fell asleep. Then she made a cup of coffee and stared at her half-done portrait, pretty bad, in the waning light of the afternoon.

Through the window she watched the men and women in their winter coats. How lonely she had felt in the house in the suburbs, but with no peace to justify the loneliness! She would have preferred the trees, even the lawn mowers, to the traffic, but the city was the place where she had started with Inder, so it was the only place she could return to. Besides, the campus was a block away. From a phone booth across the street she called Inder at work.

"I've got a studio," she said.

"That's great!"

"Move out with me."

"Are you crazy? We can't."

"It's the perfect solution. Let them have the house. We can go back to being lovers. I married you, not a whole damned household."

"Don't say that. I'd like to be irresponsible too, but we can't."

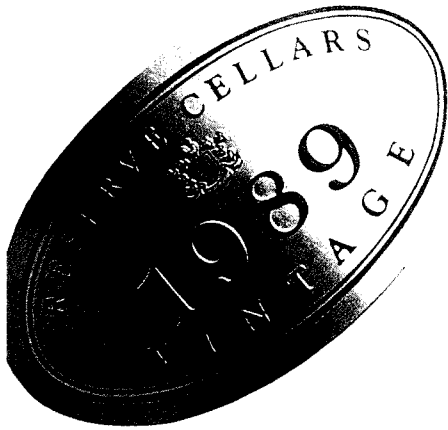
"We can be anything we want. You told me that."

"I meant it. I'll be getting six figures by the time I'm forty, and you'll have so many shows you'll have to hire someone—"

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"I don't want to hire anyone," she said, sobbing.

She unwrapped her palette and stroked a little paint onto the canvas. Then she walked to the bank where Inder worked and waited for him. "Let's go home," he said. "They'll stay up all night if we don't come home."

"Don't you ever make a move unless they make it first?"

"What do you want me to do? Give up my family?"

"You don't have to give them up," she said. "Just put them up. Somewhere else."

"They wouldn't go," he said, "even if I asked them to move out. They made a pilgrimage to every temple in India just to have me. They sacrificed themselves to send me to the best schools."

"So now you must sacrifice yourself," Grace said. "But you can't sacrifice me."

"I'm not asking you to sacrifice."

He looked as gray as the paints she'd been pushing around that afternoon. "Come home with me," she said.

"You come home."

"Couldn't you take them out some night, so I can come and pack my clothes?"

"I don't have to take them away," he said. "They forgive everything."

SHE COULD HAVE CALLED HER ANY TIME, but she could understand. She might even have welcomed the silence if it hadn't left her staring at the phone, lunging for it on the first ring, dialing him at work and then hanging up before his secretary could answer. She didn't dare call him at home, even at night.

She threw her energy into teaching, spent too much time with her students, though she couldn't wait to get home and work on her painting: long, lugubrious faces, their complexions gray, their eyes mere holes.

After three weeks he called. "I wish I'd never supported you in the first place," he said. "You might not have left as soon as you got some money of your own."

"It's not the money," she said. "I thought you understood."

"I do. They don't. You've got to come over."

"Are you alone?"

"I thought you'd rather see them here. They're talking about looking for you at the college."

"They wouldn't!"

"They need to feel like they tried to reconcile us. That's how things are done in India."

"This is *not* India," Grace said. "Don't they know that their 'little India' split us apart?"

"You won't say that, will you?"

"Neither one of us says anything," she said. "That's the problem!"

When she walked through the door, Darji took off his turban and laid it at her feet. Bibiji, kicking it out of the

way, threw her arms around her and made kissing noises in the air. Behanji wept: "I will give you my gold, all my diamonds, if you will return."

Inder stood in front of the door, his face blank, as if he had never had anything to do with any one of them. Grace stared at him and remembered her painting. She wanted to slap him; then she wanted to comfort him—anything to shock him into loving her again, but not in this place. She pushed Bibiji away. "I haven't come to take your gold or your turban—"

"You must come back," Behanji said. "This is ridiculous. You and my brother have no differences that cannot be reconciled. If you wish, you can sleep in the room with me. Look at you, you are young, you are healthy. You will have many children. It is true what I say, no?"

"No," Grace said. She stared at Inder, unable to find words. "Tell them," she said. "Tell them, damn it."

"Grace needs some time alone for a while," he said.

"No!" she said. "No. What Grace needs is a house of her own. If you want to stay with them—"

"I can't!" he said.

"I can't either." She pushed him aside and opened the door.

"Wait!" Darji said. "I am elder of this family. I forbid you to divorce my son."

Grace laughed. His mouth fell open. Inder said, "No one said anything about divorce."

"Do not go," Behanji cried. "You will stay tonight, have some food. Leave that place in Philadelphia. I will give you new clothes."

"I left my clothes here," Grace said. "All I have in Philadelphia are my paints." She turned and walked out the door.

"Grace!" Inder said.

Darji stood up and fell on his face on the threshold. "I have humbled myself!" he cried. "Witness: I have touched my daughter-in-law's feet!"

Grace drove away before he could throw himself in front of the car. The silence of the road felt almost warm, like the comforting silence of her mother when as a child she was too sick to go to school, and lay on the sofa all day, sipping ginger ale. Her studio was even quieter. She lay on the mattress sipping wine until the voices stopped ringing in her ears.

Inder had seemed not to be there at all. Turning himself off was the only way he'd managed to accept the situation. Grace understood that. But she could never have learned to ignore what was going on right in front of her face. For one thing, it would have killed her work.

Living without him wasn't easy. She taught. She painted. Sometimes she spent a weekend with her parents, but after a night outside the studio she began to miss the smell of paint, the incomplete portrait, the hours spent looking into space while lines and figures flashed before her eyes. Within a few more weeks she had almost grown to like missing Inder.

For months she heard about him. Behanji sent accusatory letters to her at the college. At first Darji was dying, Bibiji had lost ten years off her life. Inder lost weight daily and snapped at his family all the time. Then Darji was better, but would never smile again; Bibiji was eating, but only small-small bites. Inder was developing a horrible temper and would listen to no one.

The last letter shunted all the blame:

I have been blind, my sister. Now I see. He is cold. He is my own brother, but I call him cold. I do not see how you could have made a love marriage. When he was born, the only son, he was spoiled by too much love. I tell you, they are my mother and father, but they are wrong. He grew up expecting everything and getting everything he wanted. And because of him—this boy—because he went to the best schools, wore the best clothing, and had more toys than I got in my lifetime, because of this I have had no dowry. I did not marry and have sons of my own because my brother got everything. It is a fact. That is why I am forced to live on his charity, to share his home. If I had any other choice, I would not.

So, Grace thought, a six-year-old child is supposed to prevent his family from killing itself for him. That would make a good mythic triptych. No: a twenty-one-year-old woman is supposed to know she can't give up her future for a six-year-old brother, who will one day leave the family and find a woman of his own. No doubt in India people had different ideas. She wrote a letter:

Look here, Behanji, maybe he is cold, though for a time I thought he gave me all the warmth I need. Maybe you should blame your parents. But blaming anybody after twenty-five years is no way to get on with your life. Get a job, for God's sake. Learn to drive. You're only forty-five. Lose a little weight and you might meet some lonely divorcee a damn sight warmer than your little brother.

Her letter may have been a bit harsh, but absence had made Grace's heart a good deal harder, and though the same absence told her that she'd never again live with Inder, she thought the least she could do was leave him

with a better life than they had lived when they had tried to live together.

She avoided other men. Men had always gotten her into trouble. Why had she expected Inder to be any different? She went to the campus. She came home. She painted. She was happy with her latest. It portrayed a gray-faced man, abstractly outlined with a skeletal jaw, a hanging, startled mouth, and big, uncomprehending eyes. A little derivative, but it worked. Her current canvas was so far nothing but a blur of the same grayish white.

As the months went by, she put off the decision to file for divorce. She knew Inder was putting it off too. That had always been his way. She loved him. She always would. But she had loved other men, still loved some of them, and had gotten over them, except in memory. Such memories were often sweet.

In the corner that she had turned into a rudimentary kitchen, she watched half a pot of coffee materialize, feeling as if with this little space that no one else trod, no one else dirtied, no one else cleaned, she owned the world. Pouring a cup, she unwrapped her paints and began to put the finishing touches on a piece she liked even better than her last—two gray-white faces this time, with just a touch of yellow. Elongated, the figures stretched from crown to abdomen as if they were hanging from the skyline behind them. They wore the same wide-eyed stare as their frightened brother, but she'd managed to work a

touch of comprehension into their eyes, like the reconciliation to fate she envisioned in the heart of Christ, hanging on the cross, right after he had cried out to his Father, "Why have You forsaken me?" and understood the silence of God's reply.

SOMEONE KNOCKED ON THE DOOR. SHE HESITATED. This was her day to paint, and she'd been saving the whole day to finish this portrait, *Grace*. She'd begrudged every minute spent showering, brewing coffee, getting dressed.

She opened the door. Behanji stood there, lugging two



big bags. She dropped the suitcases and threw her fat arms around Grace.

"Sister! We must not be alone."

"Are you crazy? What is this?"

"All that I own in the world."

"I told you," Grace said, "I don't want it. Inder and I are no longer together. There's no changing our minds."

"I know, sister. Oi! So many steps! I must sit."

Her big haunches spread out on the mattress. "We need furniture, sister." From the mattress she could see *Grace*. Its dual stare turned her face as gray as the paint. "You made that?" she said.

"I haven't made it yet. I was about to make it when you came in. How did you find my studio?"

"Telephone, sister."

"I never got your call."

"The address book."

"Inder told you? I'll kill him."

"No, no, you can't do that," she said. "Listen, I will tell you. I know that you and Inder are divorced."

"We're not divorced."

"Do not worry, I am reconciled. Even Mummy and Daddy are reconciled. Perhaps it is too soon to say, but when he is ready, they will find him another wife."

"Another wife?"

"He will be happy. Don't worry, sister. I will lose weight, I promise. As for marriage, what is a woman when she is too old to have children? We will find for you, my sister. I have wasted my life for my brother, but I will not waste it with my sister!"

"I'm not—" Grace started, but what Behanji wanted to call her was not entirely the point. "You're forty-five years old! When are you going to live your own life?"

"I will find a job," Behanji said. "You will paint."

"I can't paint! I can't even breathe when you're around. I need privacy. I need to be alone."

"Paint. I won't disturb you. I'll unpack quietly. Like a little mouse."

"No! No, no. I want my own home, my own space, not just to work, to live in."

"But we feel it is the same house," she said. "My brother's house is my house. Just as it is your house. You see, it is the same house, brothers, sisters, mothers, husbands, and wives. Just because you are divorcing my brother does not mean you are not still my sister. I think of you that way. And my sister's home is my home. See?"

"No," Grace said. Behanji would never understand. Grace wished she had learned Punjabi; maybe it would have been easier to communicate with them, even Inder. "Would you like a cup of tea?" She remembered that they always took tea in the afternoon. Behanji shook her head.

"Well, I'm going to tell you, even if you don't understand. My problem was never with Inder. It was with you."

"Me? What have I done?"

"I can't work with you around. I can't work with any-

one around, and I need to work, all the time, even if it's only in my head. Even if it looks like I'm not working."

"Everyone works too hard in America." Behanji sat, staring at the painting.

Grace stared too and found herself longing, more than ever, to get back to it. "Shall I call you a cab?"

"I can manage," Behanji said. "There are many taxis on the corner."

Grace kept staring at her painting after Behanji had left. She didn't like it nearly as much. She dialed Inder's office. "Your sister was here."

"Oh?"

It was the first she'd heard his voice in months. She almost forgot what she wanted, hearing that voice. "She wanted to move in with me."

"I take it you didn't let her."

"I'm sorry it took me so long to call," Grace said. "I didn't want to bother you."

"That's news."

"I made a big mistake. I'm sorry."

"Is there anything else? Because if that's all you wanted to tell me, you could have told me months ago."

"I haven't exactly been out of touch," she said. "Your sister has been writing me letters."

"That's not all she's been doing."

"I think you ought to pay her back that dowry."

"What?"

"It wouldn't take much: her own apartment, driving lessons, and if you're feeling generous, a car, some employment counseling."

"Are you coming home?"

"I am home. And even here I can't get away from your family. They should hate me. Why don't they hate me?"

"In India a marriage is for life."

"Is that why we haven't filed for divorce?"

"Do you want a divorce?"

"It's not why I called."

"Come home," he said.

"You come here."

"I have a meeting in two minutes."

"I've got work to do myself."

But neither one of them hung up.

"If your sister can stop by," she said, "I don't see why you can't."

"If I stop by," he said, "I'll be caught in the middle again."

"You are in the middle."

"I've got to go."

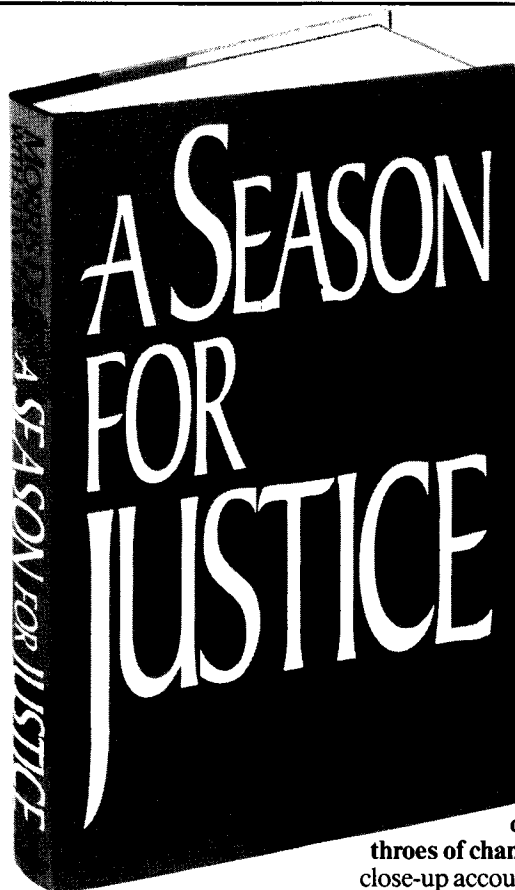
"Good-bye."

She cursed her stupid luck. The lines of her portrait blurred in front of her. She tried a wash. By nightfall she had managed to blend the foreheads of the figures into the cityscape behind them. The painting needed something. She opened a tube of primary red, put a dab of paint on the tip of her finger, and touched a dot above each figure's eyes. □

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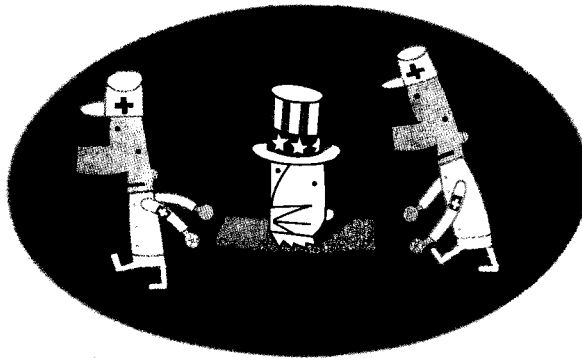
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HEALTHY COMPETITION

BY REGINA E. HERZLINGER



The debate over who will pay for health care in America has recently become more heated than ever before. The only points on which doctors, insurers, and employers agree are that costs are running beyond control and that the current system is unworkable and inequitable. Americans will almost certainly have to become more aware of what their health care costs and pay a higher share themselves. Most of the proposals being discussed fall into two categories, each of which is addressed in several proposals now before Congress: establishing a national-health-insurance program; and enlarging the current system, requiring employers to provide insurance to currently uninsured workers and the government to provide insurance to the poor unemployed. A third, less often discussed approach—creating competition by enabling Americans to shop for their own policies—is the one described in this article

WHEN IT IS GOOD, THE AMERICAN health-care system is very good. American biotechnology products have revolutionized the practice of medicine, harnessing our bodies' immune systems to fight invaders that in the past could run rampant—for example, the seemingly invincible bacteria that cause septic shock, the country's thirteenth leading cause of death. American medical devices are equally remarkable, giving life to those with terminally diseased organs, giving mobility to those crippled with arthritic joints and deadened nerves, and even, miraculously, restoring the sense of hearing to those deprived of it. And the prowess of American health-care providers attracts patients from around the world.

But when the system is bad, it is horrid. Its tremendous scale and the resulting hobbling effect on the nation's productivity are critically linked to our problems of

competitiveness. Health expenditures, at \$676 billion last year, strain belief. In 1988 they accounted for one out of every nine dollars of our gross national product—nearly twice the proportion in Japan. The health-care expenses of the business sector nearly equal its after-tax profits, and the many attempts to control those expenses are now conceded to be failures. Because health-care costs grow more rapidly than the economy (their growth was 60 percent higher than general inflation in 1988), they will command an ever larger fraction of our GNP.

These vast sums do not achieve commensurate benefits. Consumers view hospitals as wildly inefficient. They rank hospital charges below even automobile-repair costs and lawyers' fees in terms of value for the money. By some measures of health America ranks among the lowest of developed countries: we die younger and lose more of our babies. Our system does little to reverse widespread addictions to alcohol, drugs, unhealthful

food, and nicotine, which lead to the heart disease, cancer, diabetes, strokes, and violent incidents that prematurely kill us. Fifty million Americans still smoke cigarettes and 30 million abuse drugs or alcohol. Ours is a system for curing illness, not for promoting health.

And it does not even do very much for the most prevalent health problems: chronic conditions such as arthritis, which afflicts 32 million people; bad backs, afflicting 16 million; migraine headaches, 9 million; and allergies, 23 million. A friend with a bad back told me recently, "I couldn't find a multidisciplinary team that could treat my problem. So instead I went from one doctor to the next. They all offered different prescriptions. Neurologists wanted to medicate, radiologists to take pictures, orthopedic surgeons to operate, and sports-medicine types to exercise my abdominal muscles. My back still hurts!" The American health-care system is organized around medical specialties, such as neurology and orthopedics, rather than patients' problems.

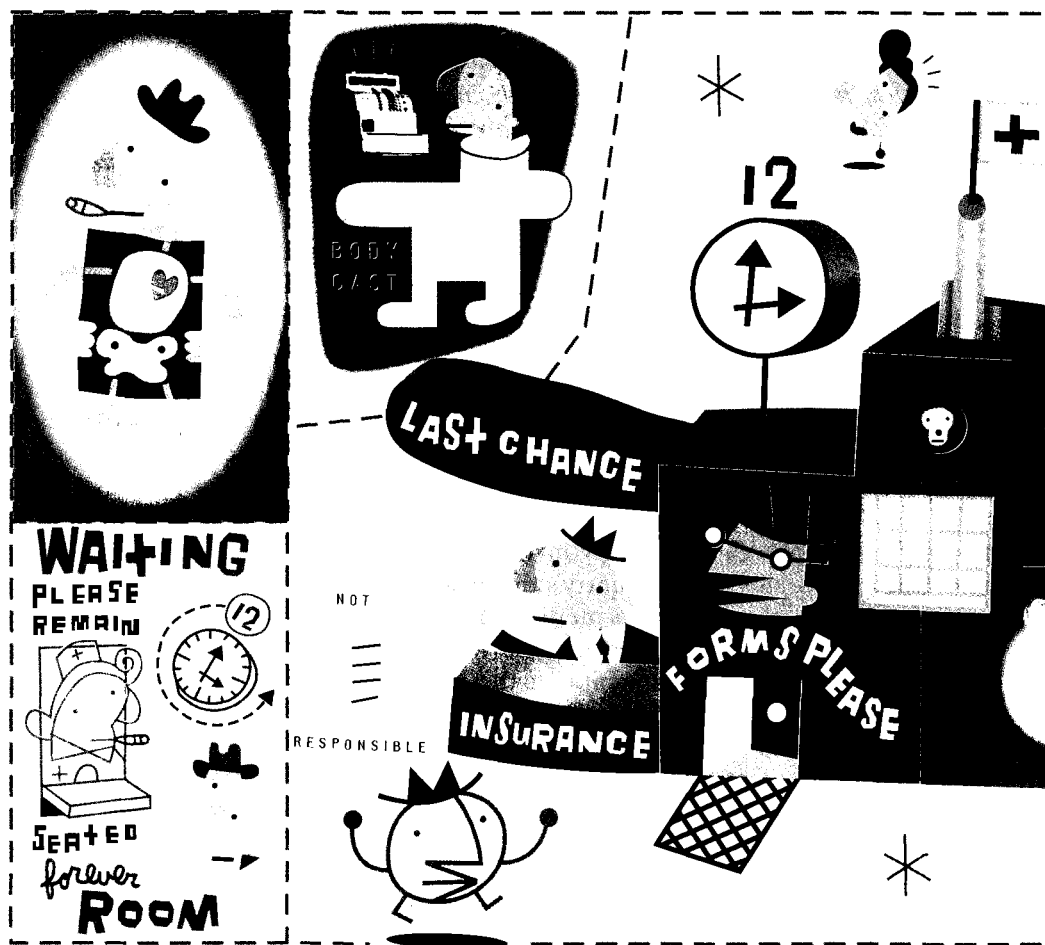
And the system is inconvenient. Though Americans dearly love their doctors, they complain of long waits and troublesome office hours. The 117 million working Americans find it hard to locate care when they are not working—in the evening or on weekends—and in easily accessible locations. The convenience revolution reshaping the American service industry has so far eluded the health-care system. Patients must continue to be patient.

But these flaws are quibbles when compared with the system's lack of charity. Despite the gargantuan expenditures, too little money exists for the poor and those impoverished by financially catastrophic illnesses. Children have died because their families cannot afford the organ transplants they need and nobody else will pay for them. More than a third of those released from a state mental hospital that was "deinstitutionalizing"—releasing the mentally ill to the community—became homeless within three months, according to one study. Another study of more than 500 homeless adults found that the majority of those with prior records of mental illness had not received outpa-

tient mental-health services in five years. The uninsured poor do have access to hospital care, but the care they get is not always equivalent to care for those with insurance. They can be transferred without warning from private hospitals to government ones.

And those cursed with long-term debilitating conditions, such as Alzheimer's and stroke, cannot afford the costs of the nursing-home care they require—at least \$20,000 a year for patients paying out of their own pockets. For the most part only the indigent are fully insured for nursing-home services; other users must pay for them directly. Seven million relatives and friends of people who need nursing-home care, many with full-time jobs and other family responsibilities, struggle to themselves provide the services that our health-care system does not fund. And, ironically, the sick people who most need health insurance may also find it difficult to obtain. In some cases those with a "prior medical condition," such as AIDS or kidney disease, must either undergo a lengthy waiting period before receiving insured treatment or else are denied health insurance.

The dedicated doctors who have created much of what is good about our health-care system are increasingly dispirited. Despite high incomes, averaging \$132,550 in 1989, and their patients' admiration—doctors are ranked very high among all the professions for integrity—they



complain bitterly of a loss of autonomy in practicing medicine and a consequent loss of quality in care. Doctors are newly pressured to reduce their use of the hospital system through various mechanisms collectively referred to as "utilization review." Often they may no longer freely hospitalize their patients; instead they must obtain "pre-admission certification" or a second opinion. Once a patient has been admitted and after he has been discharged, "concurrent" and "retrospective" utilization reviewers monitor the doctor's use of hospital resources. Doctors must overcome these hurdles before being paid for their services. This is likely one reason that some say the caliber of medical-school graduates is expected to decline. More than 30 percent of current physicians say they would not have gone to medical school if they had known what they now know about medicine as a career.

False Diagnosis, Dangerous Prescriptions

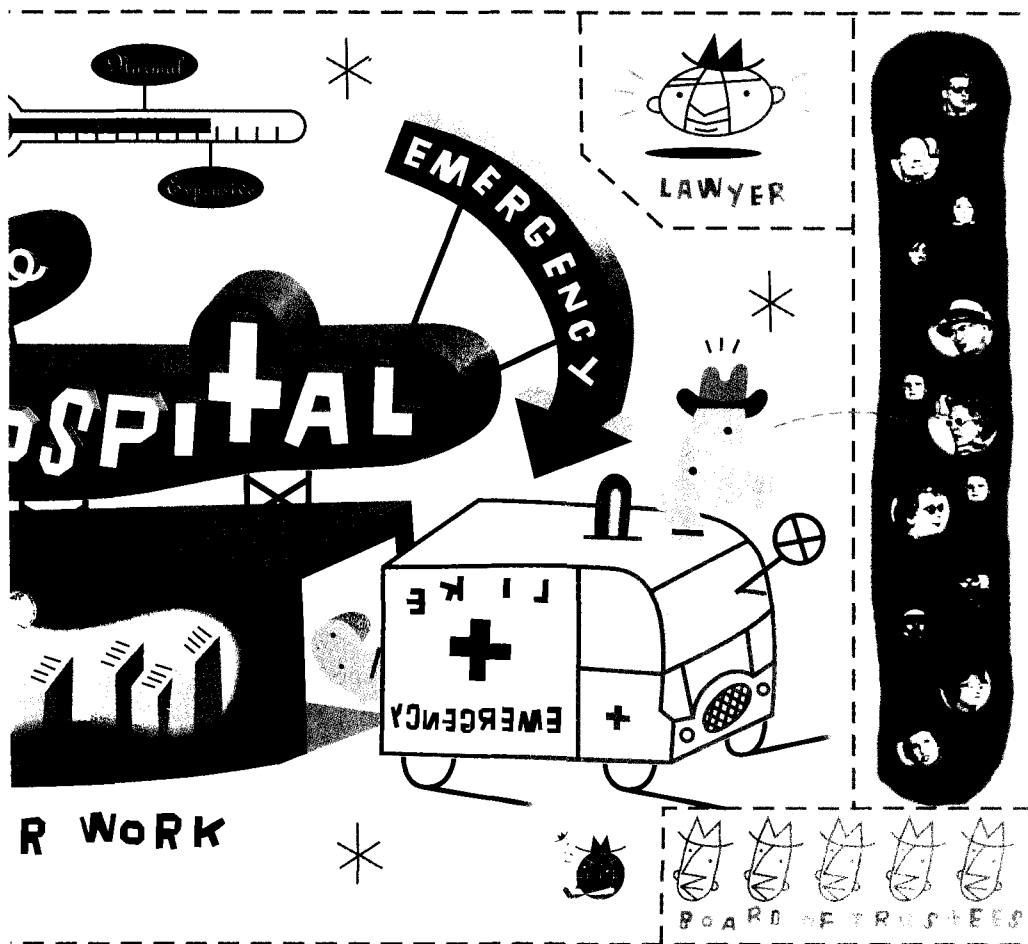
HOW CAN WE MAKE SENSE OF THESE DISPARATE symptoms? Advocates of national health insurance say they result from the absence of a centrally administered system to provide all Americans with a standard health-insurance policy. Organizations like the AFL-CIO, the American Postal Work-

ers Union, and Consumers Union, and U.S. congressional representatives like Marty Russo and twenty-five others who recently introduced a national-health-insurance bill, contend that such a system would both enable universal access to health services and reduce costs.

As evidence of the need for national health insurance, they cite the 37 million or so Americans who have no health insurance, and as evidence of savings, the lower costs experienced by countries that supply it, such as the United Kingdom and Canada. The sums spent by U.S. private health-insurance companies to run their business—\$19.7 billion in 1988—would decline dramatically, they claim, if a government organization were in charge of all the funds, replacing the private companies and at the same time considerably simplifying the billing requirements of health-care providers, resulting in further savings. This organization could also ration health-care products and services whose costs exceed what is considered to be their value, either by excluding them from insurance coverage or by allowing only low payments for them. Two health-policy experts include the following among the many technological advances whose expense might lead to rationing: the drug AZT, which can delay the onset of AIDS; the biotechnology product erythropoietin, which combats the debilitating anemia contracted by many victims of kidney failure, cancer, and

AIDS; and implantable devices that keep people with weak hearts alive.

National-health-insurance advocates contend that insurance would also benefit the business sector. They portray the business sector as often forced to absorb health-care costs not paid by others, such as the uninsured and the federal government, whose stringent DRG (for "diagnosis-related group") payments—the prices the government will pay for treatment relating to a given diagnosis—may not cover all the costs of the people insured under Medicare. The congressional Pepper Commission on Comprehensive Health Care recently characterized "cost-shifting" as a "hidden tax—much of which is paid by the employers who offer insurance," and estimated the



business-sector burden to be \$8.3 billion for hospital costs alone.

The cost-shifting argument has also been used to support proposed legislation, recently filed by U.S. senators George Mitchell and Edward Kennedy, among other Democrats, that would make businesses responsible for providing health insurance to most employees, thus preventing a cost shift from uninsured employees to insured ones. Similar legislation, penalizing employers over a certain size for not providing insurance to their employees, was enacted in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts while Michael Dukakis was governor. Unlike the bills of national-health-insurance advocates, these plans involve the private health-insurance system.

Some businesses have bought the cost-shifting argument. Chrysler, insisting that it was not powerful enough to reduce costs and resist large-scale cost-shifting, announced its advocacy of programs to insure the uninsured and included a Canadian-style national-health-insurance program among the models it would support. Other businesses also support the idea, in part because of the happy experiences claimed for Canada's program. Canada's health-care costs were only nine percent of GNP in 1987, while U.S. health-care costs were 11.1 percent. All Canadian citizens are insured and are said to be content with the system. And the system is not completely socialist: although the government is the sole source of their revenues, the hospitals and doctors remain in the private sector.

Although Canada is supposed to show national health insurance at its best, a close look at the Canadian system can raise grave doubts. For instance, a recent study found that the apparent 2.1 percent difference between Canada and the United States in proportion of GNP devoted to health care is largely the result of differences in accounting practices, in the age of the populations, and in spending on medical research. Adjusting for these differences, Canada's percentage of GNP rises to 10.6, and the gap between the two countries narrows considerably. Canadian health-care costs currently inflate at rates that exceed ours.



The national-health-insurance prescription could be deadly, saddling the economy with billions of dollars more in taxes while endangering the world-class research, free choice, and abundance of top-quality providers that are the hallmarks of our system.

Still, the percentage is lower. How do the Canadians do it? For one thing, they are less prone to incur heavy expenses. The Canadian pregnancy rate among fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds, for example, is half ours. And Canadians have less ready access to health-care services and technology. In 1989 an "urgent" pap smear required two months in Newfoundland; in virtually all the provinces a hip replacement required a wait of six to ten months. Two provinces have had to buy open-heart-surgery services in the United States because of the severe constraints on their own capacity; British Columbia contracted with American hospitals to perform some of the 700 such operations its residents required in 1989. In "Sick to Death," *MacLean's*, Canada's leading newsmagazine, reported on the deaths caused by long waits for life-saving surgery. Difficulties in obtaining care are exacerbated because Canadian doctors and nurses can go on strike to settle payment disputes with the government, their sole source of revenue, and sometimes do.

Some of the Canadians who can afford to do so cross the border to receive immediate services in the United States, thus receiving better access to health care than less-affluent Canadians. Inequitable distribution of health-care resources occurs in the British national health system as well: its expenditures per person for members of the highest two socioeconomic classes were 41 percent higher than those for members of the lowest two. Also, contrary to the claims of some of its proponents, Canada's system has not adequately protected citizens against the costs of long-term care. According to a survey of Canadian nursing homes, individuals paid for 31 percent of all nursing-home expenses in 1987-1988.

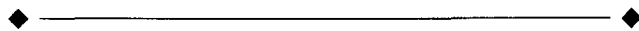
The \$339 billion or more in new taxes that one study estimated would be needed for the United States to implement a Canadian-style health-care system would raise tax rates so high that the United States would be among the most highly taxed countries in the world. To fund it, either income-tax or payroll-tax rates would have to increase by at least 14 percentage points. Ironically, some of the business people who hope that national health insurance will at last free them might well find themselves paying more than they did before. For example, the study estimates that if such a system were funded solely by a payroll tax, the automobile industry, which in 1989 paid \$3,055 per worker for private health insurance, would pay about \$5,641.

Like Canada's health-care system, national-health-insurance proposals lose their appeal under close scrutiny. The absurdity of casting the federal government as an efficiency expert—or fifty state governments, as many proponents advocate, in an analogy to the Canadian system of administration by province—is illustrated by this question: If the cost of health care can be controlled through centralized purchasing of a standard product, why not lower the costs of other necessities, such as food and housing, in the same way? Because centralized pur-

chasing of standardized products destroys competition—the interaction of many buyers with many suppliers to create an ever greater variety of better and cheaper products. Administrative economies gained through mass purchasing would be dwarfed by the waste and inefficiency that inevitably accompany centralized purchasing, whether in communist economies or in our federal government.

A significant measure of the cost controls in any national-health-insurance plan would likely derive from delaying health-care services and rationing technology. But rationing and delays are far from what the American public wants. For example, in a large 1987 survey a majority rated insurance coverage of “heart transplants which cost \$100,000 per patient and would, on average, give patients 5 years additional life” as essential or very important, and did not object to a required out-of-pocket payment of \$5,000 from insured patients who undergo this procedure. Americans support funding for medical research even more strongly than Medicare and Medicaid, and a large majority of all Americans rate freedom to choose providers as very important.

The cost-shifting argument, too, is dubious. In the period 1984–1987, while businesses increased the number of insured employees and Medicare’s DRG restricted-payment system went into full swing, the business sector’s share of expenses for health services and supplies *declined*. No cost shift in sight. The real victims of cost-shifting are not businesses but the public, whose share of health costs increased by 5.4 percent during this time. Yet when asked to rank social initiatives, Americans do not favor providing health insurance to the uninsured, as national health insurance would do, thus preventing cost-shifting. In a recent opinion poll they gave this idea only half as much support as proposals to fund long-term care. Perhaps the many people who voted for George Bush, believing his pledge not to raise taxes, fear the increased taxes it would bring.



IRISES

Imagine him imagining the painting.

So many small strokes, to be generous as flowers themselves.

As if even though less is more, more can also be more,
kinder. It helps these irises escape

back into the wild lavishness of flower root, grass seed,
that life still happening. There, across the coast road,
where the pelicans fish by crashing. They just stop
flying and fall.

—Laura Fargas

Most important, reforms that provide more people with the current version of health insurance will not result in complete health or complete insurance. In a recent survey uninsured and insured people with equal income levels rated their health status as roughly equal. Most health insurance pays for hospital- and doctor-based activities that treat disease, not for health-promotion activities that can reverse destructive habits, such as smoking and overeating. And health insurance does not provide real insurance. In a study of Americans’ access to health-care services, 80 percent of those who could not afford health care were insured, but their health insurance did not pay for the nonhospital services they needed, like nursing care. Health insurance is more appropriately called “hospital insurance.” In 1988 patients paid for only five percent of hospital expenses and 19 percent of doctors’ expenses—but for a whopping 48 percent of nursing-home expenses. Of the many bills introduced in Congress, Representative Russo’s is the only one that fully integrates long-term care into its health-insurance coverage. A prescription of national health insurance or of required health insurance by employers neither promotes health nor provides insurance for catastrophically expensive care. The national-health-insurance prescription could be deadly, saddling the economy with billions of dollars more in taxes, while endangering the world-class research, rapid access to technology and services, free choice, and abundance of top-quality providers that are the hallmarks of our system.

The Roots of the Problem

IF NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE WOULD NOT CURE the problems of the American health-care system, what, then, is responsible for them? Suspicion falls heavily on hospitals, which make up the largest component of the system. In 1988 hospitals accounted for 39 percent of all health expenditures—more than doctors, nursing homes, drugs, and home health care combined.

Although U.S. hospitals provide outstanding research and frequently excellent care, they also exhibit the classic attributes of inefficient organizations: increasing costs and decreasing use. The average cost of a hospital stay in 1987—\$3,850—was more than double the 1980 cost. A careful government analysis published in 1987 revealed the inflation of hospital costs, over and above general price inflation, as a major factor in their growth, even after allowances were made for increases in the population and in intensity of care. While the rate of increase for hospital costs was 27 percent greater than that for all medical care and 163 percent greater than that for all other goods and services, demand for hospital services fell by 34 percent. But hospitals seemed oblivious of the decline: during this period the number of hospital beds shrank only by about three percent, and the number of full-time employees grew by more than 240,000.

After yet another unexpectedly high hospital-cost increase last year, one puzzled government analyst asked, "Where's the money going?" Much of the increase in hospital costs—amounting to \$180 billion from 1965 to 1987—went to duplicating medical technology available in nearby hospitals and maintaining excess beds. *Modern Healthcare*, a leading journal in the field, recently noted that "anecdotes of [hospitals'] unnecessary spending on technology abound." Medical technology is very expensive. An operating room outfitted to perform open-heart surgery costs hundreds of thousands of dollars. From 1982 to 1989 the number of hospitals with open-heart-surgery facilities grew by 33 percent, and the most rapid growth occurred among smaller and moderate-sized hospitals. This growth was worrisome for reasons of both costs and quality. Underused technology almost inevitably decreases quality of care. In medicine, as in everything else, practice makes perfect. For example, most of the hospitals with the lowest mortality rates for coronary-bypass surgery perform at least fifty to a hundred such procedures annually, and in some cases many more; the majority of those with the highest mortality rates perform fewer than fifty a year.

Unused hospital beds, too, create needless expense. The industry operated at only 65 percent of its capacity for three consecutive years, 1985 to 1987. Even those who run hospitals disapprove of this inefficiency. A recent study performed under the auspices of a group of hospitals found that Americans would retain ample access to emergency care if 194,000 beds were eliminated—21 percent of the country's "staffed" beds.

Duplicate technology and excess beds are the bait that hospitals use to lure the doctors who refer patients. From the doctors' perspective, a hospital with empty beds and readily available technology is one that promises little delay in admitting or treating patients. These costly, underutilized hospital resources bring hospitals big bucks. In 1986, according to a survey of 300 hospitals, the average cardiovascular surgeon generated nearly a million dollars in revenues for the average hospital, and an obstetrician-gynecologist \$320,000. Many hospitals spend hundreds of thousands of dollars annually on "physician-bonding" activities to attract and retain doctors. The glue in the bond is usually money.

The revenues the doctors bring not only ensure the hospital's survival but also generate substantial profits. The average hospital's profit margin for the first six months of 1989—5.8 percent—slightly exceeded that earned by the Fortune 500 companies in 1988. The profits support substantial executive compensation. Hospital chief executive officers earned an average base salary in 1990 of \$103,100. Those receiving incentive pay earned \$125,500. Some earned more than \$450,000. Their salaries increased by 8.5 percent, and those of other hospital managers by even more, while the Consumer Price Index increased by only 4.6 percent during 1989.

The causes of the decline in hospital use will not soon be reversed. It is caused by fundamental and irreversible changes in technology and consumer preferences. Technological advances have made possible outpatient surgery (surgical procedures that do not require hospitalization) and considerably reduced the trauma of many hospital procedures and the length of stay they require. For a variety of conditions major surgical invasion of the body is no longer mandatory; instead, many surgical procedures now require only a small incision, or even use a natural body opening, to accommodate slender fiber-optic tubes or miniature cameras or laser beams. Lasers not only excise unwanted growths but also seal cut surfaces, speeding the healing process. And advances in imaging technology—such as CAT scanners and MRIs—allow doctors to peer deep inside the body to see things they once could observe only after extensive surgery.

Changed patient attitudes have also reduced hospital use. Many Americans are health activists, confident of their knowledge and eager to manage their health themselves. Activists avoid hospitals, fearing the dangerous illnesses that can result from hospitalization. They also deplore the recumbent hospital patient's lack of control. They want to be vertical, involved in all aspects of their health care. Also, the millions of Americans who work and are responsible for children or impaired adults are too busy for hospitalization.

In recognition of these trends, health insurers in the 1980s began widely to pay for outpatient procedures. Technology made outpatient procedures feasible, health activists found them desirable, and health insurance made them affordable. Hospital use declined precipitously. But insurers' hopes that increased use of outpatient services would reduce hospital costs went unfulfilled. Hospitals' cost increases kept rolling along.

The Failure of Competition?

SOME ADVOCATES OF NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE point to these cost increases in the face of decreasing hospital use as evidence of the overall failure of competition in the health-care system. They argue that those who pay for hospital care cannot reduce the size and scope of hospitals by causing them to compete against one another. Only a centrally planned system, they conclude, will slim down the hospital sector.

But competition has never been attempted in the health-care industry. A competitive market requires many buyers and sellers, who freely interact to reach an equilibrium level of prices, costs, and quality. The hospital market has none of these characteristics.

Instead, the eight percent of Americans who in a given year consume hospital services pay little of the bill. Americans spend roughly five percent of their income on health care—less than they spend on restaurants or clothes. In 1989 the average "consumer unit," according

to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, paid only \$87 for hospital care out-of-pocket, far less than it spent on laundry supplies, entertainment, and pets. And the doctors who refer patients to the hospitals do not, of course, pay the hospital costs they incur either. Instead, payments are made by the insurer and, ultimately, the employer, who has paid for the user's hospital insurance. In this curious system a few employers make the decisions that millions of users would make for themselves in a marketplace, choosing insurance companies and occasionally even specifying providers, while consumers are insulated from and often unaware of the costs of the services they use.

Inefficiency is the inevitable result. For example, a doctor faced with the choice of referring a patient to a half-empty hospital that costs \$500 a day or to an efficiently managed hospital in which access to a bed or technology is more limited but which costs only \$300 a day will probably pick the former for the sake of convenience. But a patient who paid some fraction of the cost, and had the option to wait, would frequently choose the latter. This saving of \$200 a day could yield billion-dollar savings a year. An experiment conducted by the Rand Corporation involving 5,809 people over several years demonstrated the substantial reductions in hospital use that direct payment brings. Patients who paid for some of their care lowered their incidence of hospitalization by as much as 25 percent and reduced medical expenses by as much as 31 percent. With the exceptions of people with poor vision and low-income people with high blood pressure, these savings were achieved with no impairment to health. But most insured patients have no financial incentive to achieve such savings.

The tax treatment of health insurance further insulates users from costs. Recipients of health-insurance policies paid for by their employers are not taxed for the value of the policy. Present tax regulations permit employers to deduct the costs of health-care expenses incurred on behalf of all their employees, but individuals may deduct health-care expenses only after these exceed 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income. Small wonder that employers are continually asked to extend the coverage of these tax-protected benefits to dental and mental health, acupuncture, chiropractic, and services only loosely medical. Employees perceive these benefits as low cost.

What about the competitive impact of health-maintenance organizations, preferred-provider organizations, independent-practice associations, and other "managed-care" organizations? Although some, like the "staff-model" HMOs, which employ salaried doctors, are effective in controlling costs, much of their efficacy relies on rationing care by limiting access to medical specialists and hospitals. I belong to such a staff-model HMO, but Americans in general do not favor them. After many years of government support, by 1989 HMOs had enrolled only 13.2 percent of the population. One enrollee spoke for many when he told me, "An HMO is great until you get sick."

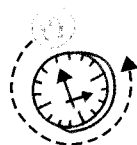
Utilization reviewers hired by insurance companies or employers cannot effect significant cost controls, because so few universally accepted standards of appropriate medical practice exist. In a 1982 article in *Scientific American*, John Wennberg, a professor at the Dartmouth Medical School, wrote:

There is a city in Maine where the surgical procedure of hysterectomy . . . was done so frequently . . . that if the rate persists, 70 percent of the women there will have had the operation by the time they reach the age of 75. In a city less than 20 miles away the rate of hysterectomy is so much lower that if it persists, only 25 percent of the women will have lost their uterus by age 75. What could account for the disparity? . . . the most important factor . . . seems to be the style of medical practice of the physicians in the two cities.

More recently Wennberg noted that Boston's elderly die at the same rate as New Haven's, despite higher hospitalization rates.

Even Medicare's watchdog organizations, which monitor the appropriateness of physicians' recommendations for treatment, use widely varying criteria; for example, a recent study said the vision levels used to determine whether cataract removal was warranted varied from 20/30 to 20/300. Congress recently authorized research to provide more standards for medical practice, but at present such standards are notable only for their rarity.

The complexity of hospital prices further compromises competition. Instead of a flat price per procedure—say, \$3,000 for the normal delivery of a baby—hospitals quote separate prices for bed days, diagnostic procedures, drugs and supplies used, and hours spent in the operating, recovery, and labor rooms. It all amounts to a welter of detail that is difficult to audit. A survey found that average charges for an appendectomy in the Boston area in 1986 ranged from \$4,246 at New England Medical Center, in Boston, to \$2,603 at the Emerson Hospital, in a nearby community. And data on which to base quality assessments are largely unavailable—hospitals fight hard against their publication. When



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Imagine the effect on the automobile industry if American car purchases were "insured," and employers paid for automobiles. Car buyers would no longer be so vigilant; after all, they wouldn't be paying for the car. Pretty soon the cars of yesteryear would reappear, loaded with options that people often don't choose when they have to pay for them. The absence of consumer vigilance in the health-care system has created the health-care equivalent of the seventeen-foot car: overlarge and numerous hospitals loaded with redundant technology.

The gap between consumers and costs could be bridged if employees bought their own health insurance and other health services. Every year employers would transfer the money they now spend on

cused, accessible health services, reduce the hospital sector, and restore confidence to doctors.

I will discuss the outlines of a health-care program that, if it were fleshed out as legislation, could achieve these ends for the great majority of Americans, and I will describe the relatively simple changes in the income-tax codes and the regulation of health-insurance companies that this program would require. The discussion assumes that the current Medicare and Medicaid programs will remain in place.

Controlling Costs

The American automobile market presents an example of the remarkable cost controls that can be effected by competition. While median U.S. family incomes nearly quintupled from 1965 to 1988, new-car prices increased by only 2.4 times. And current cars are safer, more fuel-efficient and stylish, of better quality, and available in much greater variety than before. How did cars come to be both cheaper and better? For one thing, U.S. consumers became savvy shoppers, with the aid of information ranging from Consumer Reports Buying Guides to federal government performance disclosures. And the many new, efficient foreign companies that entered the market not only provided better cars but also motivated existing car companies to improve.

health insurance to their employees, who would use it to buy their own policies. The amount transferred would not be the average cost per employee but would be adjusted for age, sex, and family structure, as it already is for each employee, and increased annually by a medical price index. (The Heritage Foundation has recommended a similar proposal.) So that employees did not pay taxes on money that once was tax-free, those receiving the transfer could deduct qualified health-care expenses from their income, up to the amount of the transfer.

With this change employees would come to treat health-care funds as theirs, and would exercise the vigilance that transformed the American car market. The corporate flexible-spending programs that already give employees some freedom in allocating "their" health-benefit dollars achieve dazzling results. Quaker Oats experienced a compound annual increase of only six percent in its flexible-health-plan costs from 1983 to 1990. And a portion of the increase consisted of cash dividends to employees. Its secret? Quaker Oats employees reduced their hospital usage by 46 percent when they were more closely involved in choosing their health-care plans. From 1986 to 1988 employees in these programs throughout the country kept increases in their health-care costs 27 to 64 percent lower than the national average.

What about employees who took the money but ne-

glected to buy health insurance, and then required the rest of us to pay for their health-care needs? To avoid these free-riders, all currently insured employees would be required to buy insurance policies that covered all health-care expenses exceeding a certain percentage of their adjusted gross income; the percentage would be one they could reasonably afford to pay and would be determined by a political process. I will call this a catastrophic-insurance policy, because it pays for all catastrophically expensive health-care services, including nursing-home coverage. Employees would need to demonstrate on their tax returns that they had bought the appropriate amount of health insurance. Failure to do so would be penalized by the Internal Revenue Service as severely as other tax violations.

This system would thus enable Americans to make trade-offs between insurance coverage and other needs. They could retain their present policies, buy more-specialized policies, or buy a catastrophic-insurance policy and save the difference or use it for other needs. For example, a woman earning \$40,000 who receives the \$3,800 cost of her family's current health-insurance policy from her employer could spend it on her present policy or on others, including a catastrophic-insurance policy that covered her family, cost only \$2,600, provided nursing-home coverage, and had a deductible of five percent of income. The \$1,200 difference in cost between her present policy and the catastrophic one could be saved or used for the other tax-deductible health expenses described below. Whatever their choice, users would be confronted with the cost of their health care—an ingredient critical to a competitive market.

Promoting Health

To promote health, new tax laws would permit deductions for activities that changed life-threatening behaviors such as smoking and heavy drinking. Many experts agree that some health-promotion activities are cost-effective, particularly those that combat smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, morbid obesity, and high blood pressure. Although the success rates in changing behavior are

low—after all, it is very difficult to break habits—the savings that successes create, by forestalling diseases like diabetes and lung cancer, more than compensate for their costs. A recent study of 6,000 retirees found that those enrolled in a health-promotion program reduced their medical costs by six or more times the cost of the program.

To protect against unscrupulous providers of health-promotion activities, a licensing authority, functioning like the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, would vet them.

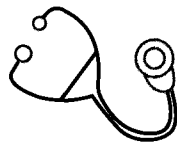
Insuring Against the Costs of Long-Term Care

Unlike present health insurance, which pays primarily for hospital and doctors' expenses and is deductible from taxes only when bought by employers, the mandatory health-insurance policy would be site-neutral and tax-deductible for any buyer. It would pay all catastrophically expensive health costs, whether incurred in the home, a hospital, a hospice, or some other setting (current policies may or may not pay costs incurred outside a hospital), or for one year in a nursing home after the age of sixty-five, after Medicare's limited coverage had been exhausted. This nursing-home insurance would protect the 73 percent of those nursing-home patients over sixty-five who spend less than a year there (44 percent of the others stay until they die). And it would relieve many of the elderly and their caretakers of much of the enormous financial burden created by uninsured long-term-care needs. Yet it would not be terribly costly, because only 43 percent of those reaching age sixty-five in 1991 are expected to spend time in a nursing home before they die, and with this new policy the cost of much of their care would be spread across the entire population. Policies for long-term care lasting more than a year could be bought separately, at a low cost to those under fifty.

Helping the Poor

Many of the 37 million uninsured Americans are poor; in 1986 some 23 million had incomes of less than \$20,000 a year. But a large number of the uninsured could well afford to pay for health insurance. Nearly nine million of them had incomes greater than the median household income. The poor uninsured should receive funding for health insurance. To avoid the free-rider problem, the nonpoor uninsured should be required to buy health insurance.

Although these changes would require new tax revenues, they would also generate some tax-revenue savings. The catastrophic insurance including nursing-home costs and the tax-exempt purchase of insurance for long-term care would free up Medicaid funds meant for the poor, by reducing the number of middle-class people who currently rely on Medicaid for their nursing-home services. With the middle class removed from its roster, Medicaid could focus on the poor, its intended recipients.



**A better system
would control costs,
promote health,
insure against the
costs of long-term
health care, and give
the poor access
to health services. It
would provide
focused, accessible
health services,
reduce the hospital
sector, and restore
confidence to doctors.**

Some Questions

THIS SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE—LIKE something for nothing. Wouldn't this system reduce costs by reducing access to health-care services that are currently insured?

On the contrary. All Americans would be insured. The catastrophic insurance would expand protection against all expenses that people cannot afford, including some currently uninsured long-term-care expenses. Cost reduction is achieved by creating a competitive market, in which people choose their own health-insurance policies.

Would this system motivate Americans to forgo needed health-promotion activities?

No. At present many health-promotion activities are neither covered by health-insurance policies nor tax-deductible. Only 34 percent of conventional insurance plans pay for adults' check-ups, and only 50 percent pay for well-baby care. In contrast, the proposed system would provide tax deductions for qualified health-promotion activities up to the amount of the difference between the cost of the prior health-insurance policy and the cost of the catastrophic one.

Is it realistic to propose that Americans shop for emergency medical care?

Of course not. Under this system, any policy that someone chose would guarantee service when the need for emergency medical care arose. But people could cast a wide net for the many services that are not needed on an emergency basis. Expectant parents would have months to shop for a birthing site; people who need the other most common hospital procedures, such as gall bladder operations and removal of enlarged prostate glands, would have the same freedom. Consumers could thus travel farther than is now the norm for the most cost-effective site. After all, people travel thousands of miles to the Mayo Clinic.

Insurance companies have traditionally protected themselves by spreading the costs of health care over a large pool of employees in one company that buys insurance. Will this system eliminate these large pools and make health insurance less financially attractive to those who provide it?

No. In the new system an insurance company able to attract millions of buyers can create much larger risk-spreading pools than those of large companies. Insurers would, however, be prohibited from reducing risks by discriminating against sick people.

Will this system increase the administrative costs of insurance companies?

Yes, but it will lower the overall costs of health care, just as the increase in the number of international automobile companies lowered the cost of cars. New or international insurance companies might well enter this huge market.

How does this system affect doctors and hospitals, whose professional ethics require them to provide service without regard to the patient's ability to pay—even when the patient has a large deductible, say \$2,000?

The new proposal considerably improves the financial position of health-care providers. It provides health insurance for all Americans, including those currently without it. To finance deductibles, health-care providers could provide loans, just as car companies, colleges, and other providers of expensive goods and services do.

What would be the impact of this proposal on the great research hospitals, which simultaneously conduct basic and applied medical research, teach medical students, and provide the most complicated and advanced hospital procedures?

Some administrators of research hospitals fear that a price-competitive hospital system would result in a loss of support for research. They claim that because research grants do not fully cover the hospital's overhead, research must be subsidized by patient-care revenues. Implicitly they question whether Americans are willing to pay the full costs of research directly. But the American public and business sector demonstrate their high regard for medical research the old-fashioned way: with money. Medical-research expenses tripled from 1978 to 1988, to around \$19 billion. The share supplied by the private sector—chiefly drug companies and venture capitalists financing biotechnology companies—is already roughly equal to that supplied by the public sector. Because of the financial promise of new medical discoveries, private funding of research has increased at rates that surpass even those of health-care costs. The U.S. government, for its part, devotes a much larger share of its funding for all academic and related research to biological, medical, and agricultural science than do the governments of European countries and Japan. And these expenditures on research increased far more than those other countries'.

This proposal may force research hospitals to admit that the costs of their research are much higher than they have acknowledged. Would the American public and American industry recoil from funding research if they knew that its real cost was, say, \$30 billion rather than \$19 billion? I do not know. Congressional committees reviewing the national budget would undoubtedly try to assess whether the research efforts were worth \$30 billion. If the answer was yes, the research would continue; if it was no, the research would be scaled back. In either case, research would be evaluated in light of accurate assessments of its true costs, which are currently unavailable.

What changes in our laws would this system require?

1. Employers would be required to pay employees the money now spent on health insurance, regularly adjusted for medical inflation.

2. Employees would be required to buy health-insurance policies that either cover all expenses exceeding a given percentage of their income or are similar to their

present policies. Their purchases would be monitored by the IRS.

3. Employees would be permitted to deduct from their taxable income the cost of their health-insurance policies and other qualified health expenses, including those for health promotion and long-term-care insurance, up to the inflation-adjusted cost of their prior health-insurance policy. This and the previous two changes could be implemented with existing "cafeteria plan" IRS regulations for insured employees.

4. The uninsured poor would receive health-insurance funding from the government. The wealthier uninsured would be required to buy health insurance and permitted to deduct it from their taxable income.

5. Health-insurance companies would be required to accept their fair share of those whose great health-care needs make them bad health risks and to meet stringent capital requirements.

The New American Health-Care System

THIS NEW SYSTEM WOULD CONTROL COSTS AND encourage the purchase of long-term-care insurance and the use of health-promotion services. It would help the poor who are now denied access to needed health-care services.

New health-insurance companies would compete for the business of more than 100 million new health-care shoppers, with policies that provided more for the money. For example, they might offer a policy that insured only high-occupancy, low-cost hospitals, giving consumers the chance to use the resulting savings to insure against the costs of health promotion, chronic care, or even long-term care. To control costs better, some insurance companies would offer lower-priced policies that paid a flat rate for a procedure—such as \$3,000 for a normal birth—rather than whatever fees the doctor and hospital charged. This kind of policy might motivate consumers to seek out a birthing site, for example, that charged less than \$3,000 and pocket the difference. Insurance companies would devote considerable resources to serving this new market, whose value is suggested by 1989 expenditures on private health insurance: \$200 billion. New markets of this size are practically unknown.

This system would also encourage the much-needed restructuring of the U.S. health-care system. New health-care providers would create the lower-cost, chronic-care, and convenient services that Americans want. For example, birthing centers, which for many women can substantially reduce the cost of a birth without increasing the risk, should proliferate. Some prospective parents might prefer to save a thousand dollars or more on a birth and use the money to buy other health-care services. The new low-cost suppliers of many other services, too, could be expected to provide them in sites other than hospitals. Multidisciplinary centers for man-

aging arthritis, back pain, chronic pain, and allergies, for example, might open in neighborhood settings and offer services during the morning, evening, and weekend hours.

This system might well succeed in shrinking the hospital sector to a more appropriate size. Consider, for example, the impact of a patient who was concerned about the costs of her hysterectomy or birth or his hernia operation. Newly efficient and effective ways of providing care for such patients faced with the need for non-emergency procedures would be developed. Consumers also would have financial incentives to verify that recommended surgical procedures were indeed necessary.

The effect on American businesses would be beneficial too. They could get back to business, freed of their futile and enervating involvement with the health-care system. Their employees should be healthier—primed with more health-promotion and chronic-care services—and less distracted, because long-term-care insurance could lighten the burden of caring for elderly or impaired loved ones. The decrease in health-care expenditures caused by a reduction in hospital costs and an improvement in health status should substantially enhance our ability to compete in a global economy.

Nevertheless, formidable problems would remain. Medicaid coverage for the poor is frequently inequitable, in many states covering only those well below the poverty level, and even Medicare's coverage is inadequate. The percentage of 1989 income spent on health care was 25 for "consumer units" earning less than \$5,000 and 14 for those over the age of seventy-five. Health-care resources are not widely available in rural and poor urban areas. And, most significant, health status is much more closely related to income than to health-insurance coverage.

Measures in addition to the ones I suggest are needed to combat these problems. Costa Rica provides an excellent model of successful provision of health-care services in poor areas. In one low-income section of San José a private, government-financed cooperative rents residential houses and equips and staffs them with health-care providers. The workers become so well acquainted with the health-care needs of the community that when I visited recently, I saw a map identifying the health status of many of the thousands of community residents.

When I discuss my proposal, some health-policy experts assure me that it is hopelessly unworkable. Some doubt its political feasibility. But what is the political downside of a proposal that would empower consumers, reduce costs, help the poor, bolster doctors, and provide long-term-care insurance and incentives for health promotion? The only clear losers would be hospitals and the technocrats who hope to tighten their hold on the health-care system. Others doubt its practicality. They believe that American consumers are incapable of shopping for health insurance and services intelligently, and that doctors and entrepreneurs are incapable of providing convenient, patient-focused, efficient health-care services.

There is little evidence to support these beliefs. Americans are fully confident of their ability to make sensible health choices. The Rand health-insurance experiment proved that they are justified: while people paying for some of their health expenses out of their own pockets spent as much as 30 percent less than those to whom health care was free, the health status of middle-class people in the two groups remained largely the same, both as perceived by the patients and as measured by criteria such as cholesterol levels, blood pressure, and risk of death. The experiment also demonstrated that cost-sharing significantly reduced the use of hospital emergency departments, with most of the reduction involving conditions deemed to be "less urgent."

Can Americans make intelligent decisions about complex health-insurance policies? The four million federal employees and annuitants who choose among the twenty-one to thirty-seven health-insurance options that the government offers are such smart shoppers that many choose options whose benefit payments exceed their premium costs. Their decisions were informed by health-insurance buying guides that rated the pluses and minuses of the policies. And a large 1987 survey showed that participants in "use it or lose it" account plans, which require a beginning-of-the-year deposit and the forfeiture of all funds left unspent at year's end, estimated their yearly expenses so accurately that forfeitures averaged only \$6 per employee.

These findings will not surprise the large health-activist segment of the American public. While popularly depicted as narcissists, health activists are instead participants in a broader transformation in American social values. Americans today prize cost-effective relationships in which they are self-reliant and powerful. Health-care manifestations of this transformation abound. The majority of Americans say that they work hard at staying healthy, even changing their life-styles to improve their health. They consider themselves the primary monitors of their health—not their doctors. Their health activism has caused a decline in harmful personal habits. Since the early 1980s many Americans have stopped smoking or drinking, worked at controlling their serum-cholesterol levels, taken substantially more safety precautions, and undergone a variety of diagnostic tests.

Health activism runs deep in American society. The low-income person can be as active in health promotion as the high-income one. For example, low-income people have been shown to be more likely to abstain from drinking, to avoid drinking and driving, and to take other such safety precautions than those with annual household incomes exceeding \$50,000.

Entrepreneurial responses to health activism are plentiful. The proliferation of health newsletters and magazines is but one example. A *Wall Street Journal* tally revealed that the newspaper's 1989 coverage of medical aspects of the heart exceeded its coverage of George



The effect on American businesses would be beneficial too. They could get back to business, freed of their enervating involvement with the health-care system. Their employees should be healthier—primed with more health-promotion and health-care services.

Bush, Donald Trump, or Michael Milken. The Reader's Digest Association, publisher of the world's most widely read magazine, recently paid \$29.1 million for *American Health*, a publication aimed squarely at health activists. The availability of health information would boom under the proposed system, with many imitators of *Consumer Reports* evaluating the quality and costs of health-care providers.

Pharmaceutical and medical-device manufacturers recognize health activists. For example, one medical device permits hospitalized patients to administer powerful painkillers themselves, rather than wait for a nurse. Patients who use it tend to administer less drug and achieve better pain relief.

Pharmaceutical companies increasingly seek to switch drugs from requiring a doctor's prescription to over-the-counter availability. That McDonald's has included frozen yogurt, "lean" hamburgers, and broiled chicken on its menu is yet another response to activism.

Doctors also have recognized the rise of health activism, albeit somewhat grudgingly. In a recent survey 80 percent of American primary-care physicians say that they are in favor of reaching medical decisions jointly with fully informed patients. Even some hospitals have responded. For example, the New York University Medical Center's Cooperative Care unit requires family members or friends to help care for patients. Although many of its patients are severely ill—AIDS and cancer patients account for more than 40 percent of the unit's patient-days—the unit has lower costs than the hospital's traditional facilities and is greatly esteemed by its patients.

Many activist consumers and providers have managed to survive under the shadow of the hospital-centered American health-care system. The system I describe would further unleash their creativity by permitting the public full control over its health-care expenditures. National health insurance, in contrast, would grant the government full control over health-care expenditures. Which would you choose to safeguard your health: a federal government bureaucracy or yourself? □

Every year at the University of Wyoming a conference is held for people who believe that they have been through episodes involving UFOs—in particular, abduction by extraterrestrials. Our correspondent, who is a noted psychiatrist, attended that conference, and found most of its participants to be more down-to-earth than he would have expected. Still . . .

THE UFO EXPERIENCE

BY JAMES S. GORDON

“THREE OF THEM ARE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF MY BED. I TRY TO HOLLER but I can’t talk. I can’t move. I’m scared, remembering the pain from the other times. They fly through the ceiling and out the roof, taking me with them. Next thing I’m in their craft, lying on a table, and I’m cold. I’m naked. They’re putting something up in my vaginal area, and I’m scared that they’ll leave it there. They wear skin-tight black coveralls. They look like black grasshoppers. No hair, a wide jaw. Black eyes, big, halfway between round and oval.

Small openings for nostrils. No ears, just foot-long antennae. A thumb and three long pointy fingers. They’re cold when they touch me. They talk to one another and I hear them in my mind. They have a damp, musty odor about them. They roll me over and put a burning hot needle along my spine. They aren’t saying anything. I can’t cry for help. Afterwards I’m floating out of a craft. There are beings with me, surrounding me. I’m not scared. I’m back in bed, drifting off to sleep. They’re gone.”

I was in Laramie, Wyoming, at the eleventh annual Rocky Mountain Conference on UFO Investigation, sitting in a classroom with Leo Sprinkle, the psychologist who organized the conference, watching and listening as Sprinkle finished a session of hypnotic regression with Mary, a forty-three-year-old hospital administrator who was recalling her abduction by aliens the previous December.

UFOs were once the news I avoided when I flipped through the supermarket tabloids. Common sense, impatience, and my training as a psychiatrist had combined to make me view them as a curious but harmless and not particularly interesting delusion. Three medical colleagues made me realize that there were aspects of the UFO phenomenon in which I should take a professional interest. A psychiatrist told me about a patient of hers, “a high-functioning woman professional,” who began to suffer anxiety attacks after seeing the face of the “alien” on the cover of Whitley Strieber’s book *Communion*. Under hypnosis and in spontaneous “flashbacks” she had recalled multiple encounters with and gynecological exams by similar-appearing “aliens.” A radiation oncologist who

was a senior consultant to the French government’s National Space Center described several people he had examined who had seemingly suffered the effects of radiation, including burns, after having witnessed “craft that fly at incredibly high speeds.” Finally, a high-ranking European public-health official explained, with the bland assurance of a chief resident presenting lab findings at morning rounds, that she herself had been abducted. These physicians appeared perfectly normal, and all of them were convinced of the reality of a phenomenon that I regarded as evidence of psychopathology. Moreover, the experiences the “abductees” reported were unlike anything else recorded in the psychological literature. I wasn’t in a position to decide whether extraterrestrials exist, and the stories told by my colleagues were unsatisfying from an evidentiary point of view: there were no signed medical reports, no crucial details that could be confirmed by independent observers. But clearly *something* had happened to these people, something powerful, strange, and transformative. When I asked my colleagues how I could find out more about people who thought they had been abducted by extraterrestrials, each of them suggested that I go to Leo Sprinkle’s conference.

Leo Sprinkle founded the Rocky Mountain Conference on UFO Investigation in 1980, when he was a professor in the University of Wyoming’s counseling-psychology department and the director of its counseling service. Sprinkle, who had been interviewing and counseling UFO experiencers since the sixties, was feeling overwhelmed by their demands. Each day brought let-



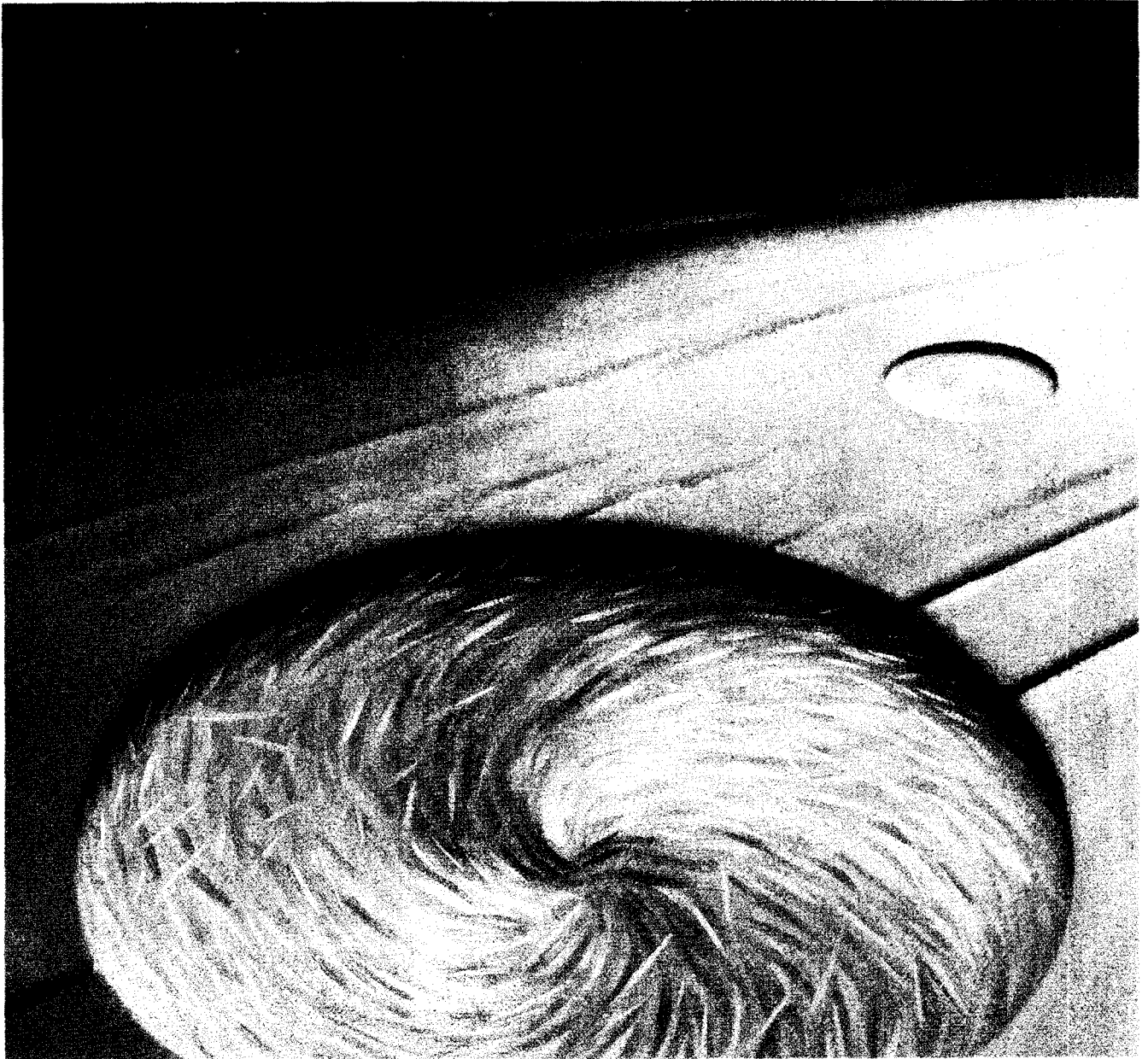
ters from people who said they had seen or felt something they could not understand; at night there were desperate calls that dragged him out of bed. The abductees, haunted by past experiences, anxious about the possibility of future ones, were particularly interesting but also especially needy. They worried incessantly about hours or days for which they were amnesic—periods of “missing time.” Terrifying images would flood back in dreams or under the stimulus of ordinary events—seeing an animal, for example, or driving down the road where a sighting had occurred. As in Mary’s case (I have changed her name and those of all others to whom I refer by first name only), memories of earlier experiences seemed to be triggered by the hypnotic recall of a given episode.

Sprinkle conceived of the initial meeting of the confer-

THE FIRST KIND

ence as an informal (first names all around) mutual-support group in which every attendee would have the opportunity to present his or her story to an attentive, respectful audience. It would help people who were isolated by the weirdness of their experience, and by the fear and bewilderment it engendered, to see that they were neither alone nor necessarily crazy. He hoped that it would also lead to sustaining networks of contacts—other people whom participants could visit or write to or call the morning after an experience. Twenty people showed up at the first conference. When they met, he remembers, it was “like old friends coming together.” Twice as many people came the second year. Last year there were 190 attendees.

The conference is held on the campus of the University of Wyoming, where Sprinkle is now a professor emeri-



tus. Most of the conference-goers are from the West and the Midwest—in particular, Wyoming, Colorado, South Dakota, and Montana, states whose wide-open spaces seem especially congenial to reports of UFO sightings and experiences. There is a sizable California contingent, and smaller ones from the East and the South. (Foreigners have also attended; reports of UFO sightings are not a strictly American phenomenon.) Perhaps three quarters of the people have had experiences with UFOs, but there are also ufologists—researchers and investigators who study the various dimensions of the UFO phenomenon. Many volunteer their services—checking out reports of sightings, interviewing witnesses, accumulating data—for the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), which is now the largest of the organized UFO groups in the United States. Several

THE SECOND KIND

others are part of the Berkeley-based New Being Project, which focuses on the psychophysiological alterations—lowered body temperature and increased auditory acuity among them—that are said to follow encounters with UFOs.

The conference consists of two parts, the first of which begins on Monday with two days of individual hypnosis sessions—such as Mary's—with Sprinkle and June Parnell, a professional counselor with whom Sprinkle has worked for years. On Wednesday this part of the conference concludes with a day-long seminar in self-hypnosis, its premise being that it is possible for people to work on their own to uncover buried memories. The second, more public part starts on Thursday with an evening get-together, and continues through Saturday night. There are meetings of a support group for the spouses and families

of UFO experiencers. Late-afternoon and evening gatherings feature presentations by visiting scholars.

But the “real experts,” as Sprinkle will remind the conference, are those who have experienced UFOs. And the heart of the meeting now, as at its inception, is the informal get-togethers and the large closed meetings where these people tell their stories. Most of them have been terrified to speak about an experience that is almost universally ridiculed, and Sprinkle has done everything possible to make them feel that here, at last, is a safe and accepting place. No critical or judgmental feedback is allowed. No one is pressured to speak, and each disclosure is made anonymously.

Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind

EVER SINCE A PILOT NAMED KENNETH ARNOLD saw what seems to have been the first UFO of the modern era, public disclosure of UFO experiences has provoked an extraordinary mixture of fascination and derision. On June 24, 1947, Arnold was cruising in a private plane near Yakima, Washington, when he saw nine disk-shaped objects flying at a speed that he estimated at over 1,700 miles an hour. Later, Arnold described their motion as like “a saucer skipping over water.” This event and Arnold’s report were—as David Jacobs, a Temple University history professor, pointed out in his book, *The UFO Controversy in America* (1975)—not only the beginning of the era of modern UFO sightings in the United States but also a crucial factor in shaping the public’s perceptions. Because Arnold was a pillar of the community—a deputy sheriff, a businessman, and a skilled pilot—his sighting was taken seriously by the Air Force, the press, and the public. Because he used the term “saucer,” Jacobs noted, an “artificially constructed piece of hardware” was implied, “something strange and even otherworldly.” And, Jacobs said, the “term also set a tone of ridicule. . . . The idea of saucers flying on their own volition was absurd.” Indeed, Arnold, initially treated with respect, was soon mocked. “If I saw a ten-story building flying through the air,” he later remarked, “I would never say a word about it.”

Since then the UFO picture has become considerably more complex. Sightings, like Arnold’s, of craft in daylight or of nighttime lights (called “close encounters of the first kind”) were the staple of the 1940s and 1950s. Most were individual observations in isolated locations, but some, like the July, 1952, sightings over Washington D.C., were widely reported and even prompted Air Force pursuit. In the mid-1950s landings were reported. Later, physical evidence of purported landings (“close encounters of the second kind”) was described. This included burned trees, indentations believed to be from landing gear, fields marked by mysterious and precisely excised “crop circles,” fields where crops were mysteriously blighted, burns on the bodies of alleged UFO wit-

nesses, and bloodless mutilations of domestic animals in the vicinity of reported UFOs. Some of these were accompanied by sightings of aliens (“close encounters of the third kind”) in or outside the craft. These beings varied greatly in size, shape, and color: four-foot-tall gray “men” with large heads and eyes, similar to the ones Mary reported, were most common, but there were also “short browns,” figures dressed in black armorlike suits, and tall “Nordic” types, among others.

In the early fifties some Americans began to announce that they had been “contacted” by aliens. One of them, George Adamski, a handyman from southern California, wrote *Flying Saucers Have Landed* and *Inside the Space Ships*, in which he described his meetings, sometimes aboard spacecraft, with a blond Venusian man, beautiful spacemen, and a “Master” who told him that the aliens had come to save Earth and the other planets in our solar system from the atomic radiation produced by atmospheric testing. Adamski and certain other “contactees” quickly won a devoted following. Most ufologists and the two major ufological organizations of the fifties, the National Investigators Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) and the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), conspicuously distanced themselves from tales like Adamski’s, which they regarded as untrue, self-serving, and ridiculous, even if somehow well-intentioned.

The first reported abduction (a “close encounter of the fourth kind”) to receive some sort of scientific scrutiny took place in 1957. Antonio Villas-Boas, a Brazilian farmer, said he was taken against his will to a spaceship and forced to have sex with a blonde female alien, who subsequently rubbed her belly to indicate that she was going to have his baby. This story, which was investigated and endorsed by a Brazilian physician, who found burns similar to those caused by radiation exposure, was generally dismissed, even by UFO enthusiasts, as a grandiose fantasy.

In 1961 a pair of more believable witnesses, who apparently had not had access to Villas-Boas’s account, said they had been abducted while driving in New Hampshire’s White Mountains. Betty and Barney Hill, a white social worker and a black postal-service employee, saw a moving aerial light. When it came closer, the Hills later said, Barney saw that it was a spacecraft with occupants. A short while later they lost consciousness.

In the months that followed this episode, Barney began to suffer from anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, and a recurrent ulcer; Betty also suffered from anxiety, connected to a series of nightmarish dreams. They sought help from Benjamin Simon, a Boston psychiatrist, who used hypnotic regression to explore possible causes of their problems. Under hypnosis Barney “remembered” that he had been essentially paralyzed, taken aboard the spacecraft, and examined physically; a circular instrument was placed over his groin. In separate hypnotic ses-

sions Betty, who was not told the substance of her husband's testimony, "remembered" that Barney's false teeth had been carefully scrutinized by aliens, that a long probe had been inserted into her navel (the aliens called it a "pregnancy test"), and that skin, hair, and nail samples had been taken. In subsequent, conscious sessions, the couple volunteered additional details, among them that their abductors were small men with gray faces and catlike eyes. The Hills' experience was the subject of John Fuller's 1966 best seller, *The Interrupted Journey*. Since then, reports of abductions by extraterrestrials have multiplied.

LEO SPRINKLE'S INTEREST IN UFOS EVOLVED WITH the field of ufology. Along with a classmate at the University of Colorado, he saw his first UFO—a silent, elliptical metal object moving far faster than an airplane—in 1949. Seven years later Sprinkle and his wife, Marilyn, observed a "light reddish-orange glow above Boulder's Flatiron Mountains." They assumed it was a planet, remarked on its beauty, and then noticed that it was "moving back and forth" and "dipping."

When he came to the University of Wyoming, as an assistant professor, in 1963, Sprinkle was already a scientific consultant to NICAP and APRO. The Hill case, and particularly the psychiatrist Benjamin Simon's role in it, inspired Sprinkle. Simon had accepted that the Hills had seen an unusual aerial phenomenon, but thought the ab-

duction improbable. He had concluded that most likely the sighting had prompted Betty's dreams, that these had come to seem real to her, and that Barney had absorbed and been influenced by the dreams as well. Sprinkle wasn't so sure. Perhaps, Sprinkle thought, the abduction was real, and hypnosis had been the royal road to its recall by both victims. After he appeared on various television programs, people from all over the country began to call, reporting their experiences and asking for his help. Sprinkle visited landing sites and interviewed and hypnotized scores of experiencers. He collected their stories and submitted a statement to Congress about his view of UFOs. Also, from 1964 to 1985 he administered standardized psychological tests to some 300 people who believed they had seen or been contacted or abducted by UFOs.

During these years hypnosis became the accepted technique among ufologists for "recovering" the hours of missing time for which UFO observers seemed to be amnesic, and for accessing contact and abduction experiences. Twenty-five to 30 percent of experiencers claimed some conscious memory of what had happened; the rest had only a vague sense, an image of a strange, uniformly lit room or a bright craft, some feelings of being naked on a table, recurrent dreams of humanoid faces. UFO investigators hypothesized that the trance state would provide access to the unconscious mind, where more-complete memories of UFO encounters might be buried. Hypnosis was already being used to help patients recall suppressed emotional traumas and to enable crime witnesses to remember forgotten details; the UFO experience seemed to have elements of both emotional trauma and external event. While hypnosis seemed to help people to "recall" their UFO encounters, it also provided grounds for questioning the validity of those encounters. As Philip Klass, a retired senior editor of *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, and other UFO skeptics and debunkers have pointed out, it is all too easy for the hypnotist consciously or, indeed, unconsciously to influence the subject's responses.

Hypnosis would play a decisive role in Sprinkle's own life. He had long been aware of childhood memories that matched the ones that UFO experiencers had been telling him about—times when he had awakened with an unexplained bloody nose or a feeling that he had been "visited" during his sleep or had had a peculiar "nightmare." His was of "a strange man walking through the bedroom wall." Eventually Sprinkle asked a colleague to hypnotize him. He says that in a hypnotic trance, he found himself at age ten, "standing on board a craft, looking out a huge window into space. A tall, human-looking guy, wearing a one-piece suit tucked into his boots, was on my left with his right hand on my shoulder. I looked up into an impressive open face, and I found myself wondering, while I was still in trance, 'Am I making this up from everything I've heard?' and then I felt a

FALLS

A poplar cut loose from the bluff upstream floats into the waterfall in full leaf, branches first, the breached crown quaking at the lip, then roots tipped into thin air, all swooped under by the pull and pelted into the long drop, soaring free.

The eye waits, letting the waterfall rise, upside down, torched on the retina's raw cup, back through optic cable into the hindmost lobe where maps of daylight sputter and go out past webs and mesh into a flickering thought.

The tree stands on its tipmost leafy branches, rooted for a second in the vertical white water. And the eye waits without blinking. Tears form. Look! The onlooker is moved, the way the tree is, seeing that the tree is still alive and falling.

—Brooks Haxton

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Get an ear on the whole world, with...

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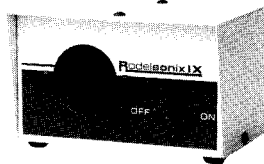
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Rid your home of pests and varmints with...

Rodelsonix IX only \$69.95*

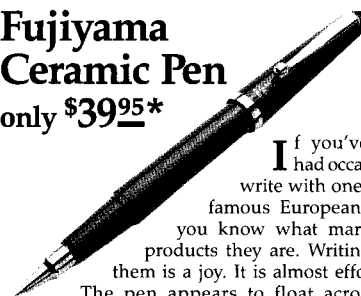
Mice, rats, roaches, bats, fleas, spiders and other pests make life miserable at home or at the plant. Old fashioned poisons get rid of them—but only temporarily, and they are a hazard to you and to your pets. *Rodelsonix IX* works off a different principle: It delivers a tremendous blast of ultrasound that is inaudible to humans and pets, but that sounds like an onrushing 747 jet to pests. It so totally disrupts their nervous system that they'll leave your home within a few weeks—never to return. There is nothing to prepare, nothing to set up—no poison and no mess. Pests just disappear.

Rodelsonix IX is an industrial-type unit that projects up to 10,000 sq. ft. (70,000 cu. ft.) in your home or in your plant. It has six variable pitch and "loudness" settings. You can even adjust it to keep larger pests, such as raccoons, pigeons or rabbits at bay. *Rodelsonix IX*. #1803A910 (\$7.95)



Does this Japanese model outperform famous European luxury pens?

Fujiyama Ceramic Pen only \$39.95*



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kind of shiver on my shoulder like the one I feel sometimes when I'm listening to music or feeling close to a client, and I knew it was the truth." The man's message, communicated telepathically, was, "Leo, learn to read and write well so that when you grow up, you can help other people learn more about their purpose in life."

After he recovered this memory, Sprinkle felt relieved. Childhood mysteries became elements in a life pattern that had been drawn long ago: it was all "preparation for my UFO research work," he says. "The psychological dilemma was over. I accepted myself as a contactee. Now I had a social dilemma. I had encouraged others to speak out and now I had to do the same."

He did so, cautiously at first, to intimates and in the protective circle of the conference. Then he told Ruth Montgomery, who in 1985 included his story in her book *Aliens Among Us*. In 1987 the *National Enquirer* picked up Sprinkle's story. The headline read "SPACE ALIENS ABDUCTED ME AS A CHILD . . . CLAIMS COLLEGE PROFESSOR," and the piece was the predictable disaster. In 1989, two years after the *Enquirer* article, Sprinkle succumbed to considerable pressure and resigned his tenured professorship. Still, by speaking out publicly Sprinkle gave heart to many people who had been trying to come to terms with experiences as strange as his.

"It Sounds So Crazy"

THE DIFFICULTIES SPRINKLE HAS ENCOUNTERED because of his unorthodox interests are far from his mind as people begin to arrive for the get-together on Thursday night. He is at the door of the hall in a dark suit, a tall, fit, bald, bespectacled man with a dark moustache. He grins widely as he sees a familiar face, and his long arms reach out to gather an old friend to him. Later he will preside over the plenary sessions, and always his presence will permeate every corner of the meeting. It is a thoughtful, kind, quirky, sometimes corny, self-mocking, optimistic, altogether reassuring presence.

Many people arrive full of smiles, as if coming to a family reunion. Others are quiet, almost furtive. "Often," Sprinkle recalls, "it goes like this: The first year they come and sit quietly. The second year they tell about their experience. And then, by the third year, they've organized a group back home and they're bringing other people." The conference-goers look for all the world like weekend diners at a steak house in almost any midwestern suburb—nice people, mostly between the ages of thirty and sixty, almost all white, polite, friendly, a bit more animated, articulate, and intellectually curious than a skeptical visitor might expect.

Though most people still refer to it as "Leo's conference," for the past year June Parnell has been the president of The Rocky Mountain Institute on UFO Investigations, which is the sponsoring group. She is a

pleasant, thoughtful, gray-haired woman, a practicing Catholic who taught in New York City public schools before she and her husband, formerly a political science professor, now in real estate, moved to Laramie. One afternoon in the late seventies, while she was caring for her three oldest children, Parnell looked outside and saw a UFO. She blushed as she described it to me: "It was bright, yellowish-white, and shaped like a flattened football." Parnell didn't notice how big or how far away it was, but she felt "light filling my head and time being eternal."

June Parnell never saw a UFO again, nor did she ever, even in hypnotic sessions with Leo Sprinkle, recover any other UFO memories. Still, this moment, which she found extraordinary and explicit, shaped her future. "I became more tolerant, more open-minded. I know now there are many paths to the same God and that God is the same no matter what you call Him." She returned to school for a Ph.D. in counseling psychology, and wrote her thesis on the test data that Sprinkle had collected from 225 UFO experiencers. According to Parnell's study, they tested normal as a group. Their personality characteristics included "above average intelligence . . . self-sufficiency . . . assertiveness . . . a willingness to think experimentally . . . and a tendency toward defensiveness." In a subgroup who believed that they had had "communication with UFO occupants or space beings," there was a greater than average tendency to "endorse unusual feelings, thoughts, and attitudes . . . to be distrustful . . . and to be creative, imaginative, or possibly have schizoid tendencies," though these characteristics did not extend into the realm of overt psychopathology. Parnell's study is one of few in the field, and is often cited to certify the basic sanity of UFO experiencers.

June Parnell rises a bit uncertainly to welcome everyone to the conference. After describing the agenda, she reminds us of the procedures for the closed sessions: "There will be no pictures or notes. Everyone will have time to talk, and it's confidential—you know, like 'I'm June, and I'm an alcoholic.'" People at my table laugh and nod to one another in recognition of the truth of the comparison.

The next morning Parnell's panel begins by focusing on the traumatic aspects of UFO encounters. She describes the ill-defined, all-pervasive anxiety, the headaches, insomnia, and muscle tension, the recurrent nightmares, and the feelings of detachment from others that the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* lists as signs and symptoms of post-traumatic-stress disorder. When she goes on to describe her own observations of the symptoms peculiar to UFO experiencers—the sudden desire to change jobs or leave a spouse or move from one's house or one's community—there is nervous laughter: if they haven't done it, they've been tempted, or know someone who has.



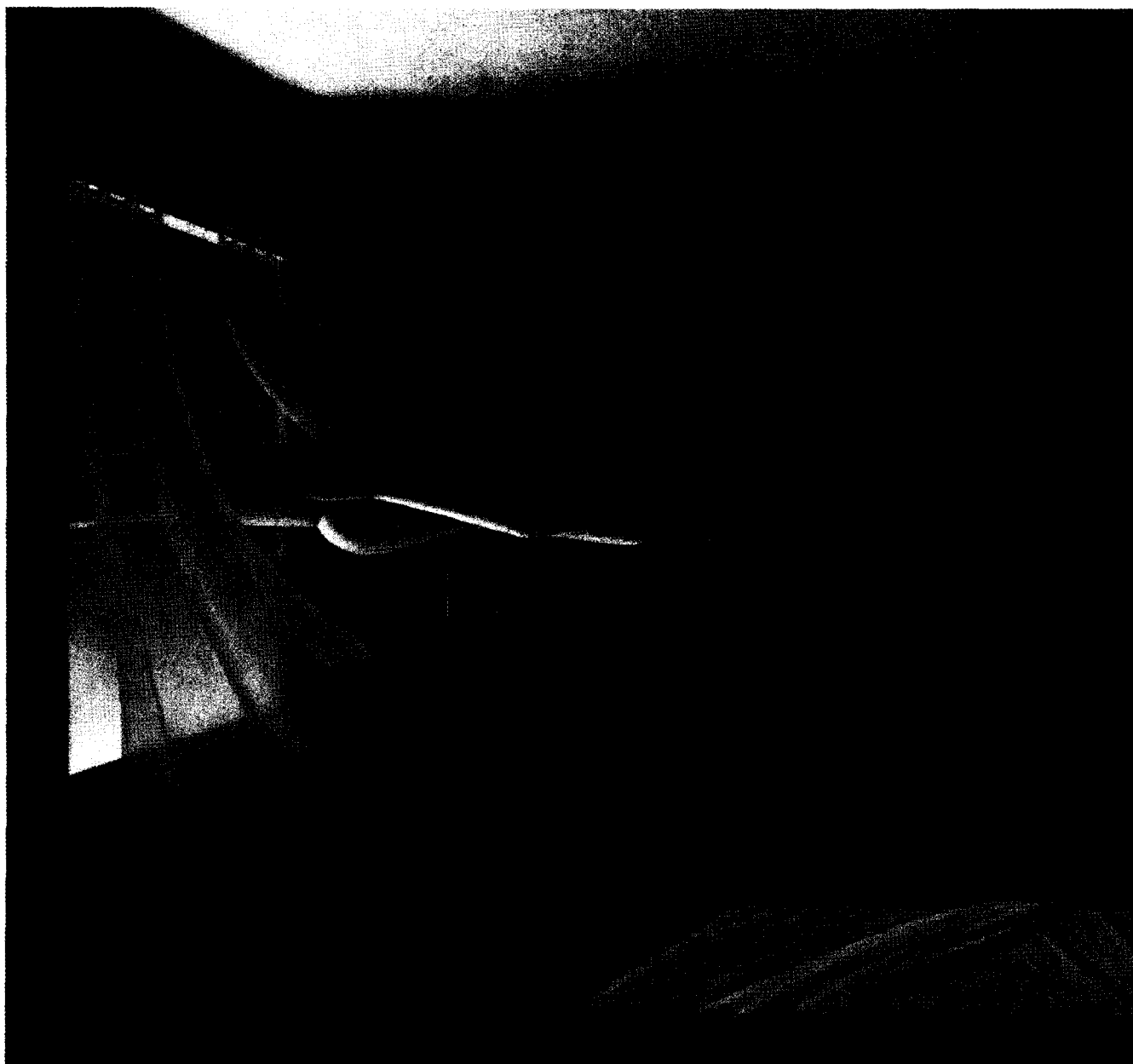
But Parnell's message has a larger purpose. Although these disorienting experiences are traumatic, they can lead to exciting growth and change. She has felt it, and so have people who have come to her for help. Haven't some of them done things afterward that they never thought possible, or tried harder to make the world a better place? Sooner or later it's time to move beyond fear and its aftermath. "Let's assume," she says, "that the beings are sorry for stepping on our toes." She quotes Sprinkle as saying that the UFO encounters are ultimately about transforming us into "cosmic citizens." Evolution, she reminds us, never comes without pain.

At lunch in the cavernous UW cafeteria the conference-goers form dense knots. I notice that here, as at the panel discussions and the get-together, the UFO couples

THE THIRD KIND

seem unusually close. Generally only one has had the experience and the other has had to come to terms with a husband's or wife's reports of nocturnal visitors who steal the spouse's attention and apparently borrow his or her body. Many couples, I'm told, do not survive the experience. The ones who are here, like Mary and her husband, Dave, are always leaning toward or touching each other, calling something to each other's attention, or whispering a confidence.

I sit off to the side with Lynn, whom I met in the self-hypnosis workshop. She is a slight, neat graphic designer in her early forties, a midwestern mother of two and the wife of a lawyer. This is her third conference. She didn't say a word at the first one. Today, acknowledging that I may not believe her, she speaks easily about seeing UFOs in the desert where she once lived. In the seven-



ties she had seen several from a distance—she assures me, laughing, that she was raised a strict Lutheran and has never taken drugs or had more than a glass of wine—and then, in 1980, had an encounter that affected her deeply. The UFO came close to her car one evening, she says, as she drove home from a ceramics class, and stayed above her, silent, telephone-pole-high. It had four lights on each side. She stopped the car and got out so that she could see it better. While she watched, the lights began to flow around the perimeter of the craft, the way they do on a marquee, and music played inside her head. After a few minutes she got back into her car. The craft followed for a while, the lights now back in their original position. Over an arroyo it “disengaged,” the lights blinked off, and it disappeared. Afterward Lynn believed that some-

THE FOURTH KIND

thing important had happened, that this contact with a UFO was reminding her that forces far beyond her understanding or control could radically alter the shape of her small, ordered world. She felt different inside, more vulnerable and less dogmatic, more blessed.

Three years ago she began to hear a voice. It said, “Now is the time” and “You must hurry.” Lynn heard the voice only when she was showering. She wanted to hear more, to find out what it was all about, but it never said anything else—“even if I stayed in till I was a prune.” Feeling otherwise okay, but beginning to doubt her sanity, she went to a psychologist. He saw her for several months, probed her relationship with her husband and her parents, did extensive psychological testing, and finally concluded that she was “a little obsessive-compul-

sive, but otherwise fine." He had no explanation for the voice.

Still curious, and still hearing the voice, Lynn went to see a hypnotherapist. She believes that in the sessions that followed, she recovered memories from an episode of missing time that had accompanied a sighting fifteen years before: an alien with "long fingers and skin like Naugahyde," a beam that transported her into a craft, an examination by a "device that looked like an x-ray but wasn't," dreams of a black panther after the event, and a sudden change in her behavior—the whole panoply of a typical abduction report. She decided then to come to "Leo's conference." She also started a UFO information group in her city. As abruptly as it had started, the voice stopped.

Lynn had never talked about the voice before, even to her UFO group: "It sounds so crazy. I've mentioned the sighting in the desert publicly, and that's enough so the neighborhood kids call me 'the UFO lady' and stick little models of ET in the mailbox."

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, IN PANEL DISCUSSIONS AND especially in the circle of safety created by the closed meetings, people screw up their courage, walk to the front of the group, and take the ten minutes that Sprinkle allows each of them to tell his or her story. When there is a pause in the flow to the front of the room, he exhorts the audience: "Remember, to relive is to relieve."

Some talks are in the nature of harrowing, intimate progress reports. We hear from Mary about what she believes she has come to remember as a result of hypnotic sessions in the past year—for example, repeated encounters as a small child with large, antlike beings who probed her vagina "to see if I'm okay" and told her that she was "special" and would help others. She has also come to believe that a 1975 memory of an owl spreading its wings (ever since, she has "been fascinated by" owls and has filled her house with figures of them) was in fact a "screen," a substitute memory, for a sighting of a four-foot-tall gray alien standing in front of a landed spacecraft. It all "sounds scary and painful, and it was—but I didn't sense they were evil," Mary assures us. "They're gathering information about the earth's climate and pollution, warning us about natural disasters. I get a feeling of impending doom. They seem to be concerned about the physical survival of mankind, about our spiritual survival."

Other accounts are informational updates or simply attempts at re-establishing contact. Alice, a young housewife from Glenrock, near Casper, in the middle of the state, describes the bright lights and the mysterious knocking noises that, she says, awoke a significant portion of the town one night recently; she details her frustrated efforts to get the sheriff's department and the press to pay attention. Peggy, a bookkeeper from a small

Colorado town, says how good she feels to be "at old-home week" and proudly describes her new willingness to go public: her license plate says UFO and a new bumper sticker reads MY OTHER CAR IS A UFO. The audience applauds before and after each speaker.

Everybody is paid respect, but a few of the people are sufficiently wacky and well known that when they rise to speak, the assembly seems to shift en masse in its seats. "The UFO Family," as I come to think of it, consistently produces this response. Its most vocal representative is its fiftyish wife and mother. She wears 1950s-style flaring pastel party dresses and talks indefatigably and deadpan about her meetings with aliens, her value to them as a "breeder," and her rancher husband's occasional frustration with her preoccupations. One night, she tells us, he woke up to find six aliens around her. Fed up with these intrusions on his bedroom, he went to the closet, got his loaded .38, cocked the hammer, aimed—and the next thing he knew, it was morning, he was lying in bed, and the .38 was in the closet, still cocked. Toward the end of the second session their teenage son, who hopes to work in electronics on the space shuttle, stands to plead with us: "UFOs are important," he concedes, "but you all have to help your children to live a normal life."

After a while, with Sprinkle's constant encouragement, the newcomers stand up, some stammering or talking through tears, like Andrea, a twenty-eight-year-old stockbroker from New York, who can only say how frightened she has been and how important it is finally to be among "people who understand." Donald, a horticulturist and one of the few blacks at the meeting, moves forward resolutely. He is visibly sweating, even in the gelid air-conditioning. "I've had my life shaken upside down in the last year," he begins, "and I've got to tell you about it." During a camping trip he had an episode of seven hours of "missing time." Donald remembers that it was 11:30 P.M. and he was walking toward his car; he saw a "group of people" coming toward him. When they were fifteen feet away, he stopped. They "looked different. . . . my mind said to run, but I was paralyzed. . . . they surrounded me. . . . The next thing I knew, I was blinking my eyes open, the sun was up, it was 6:20 A.M., my wrists were tight on the steering wheel, and I was driving east, the wrong way, out of Reno."

In the months since then, he says, he has had repeated nosebleeds and experienced paranormal phenomena. At least four times he has had a sense of having been "visited" at night. Wondering if he was going crazy, he finally consulted a therapist. Under hypnosis, he says, he began to recall abduction experiences dating back to age two and a half, and a "being" who had been with him since then, comforting him during his abductions, guiding him in his life. There is pleading in Donald's words. This soft-spoken, earnest forty-two-year-old man is desperate to see our faces give back to him the truth of experiences he is certain he has had but still cannot believe.

Ordinary People

BEFORE AND AFTER THE FORMAL SESSIONS, I return to the people I have come to meet, those who have experienced the UFOs. I interview several whom I have seen hypnotized and a dozen more whose testimony has particularly touched or interested me. We sit on the steps of the university buildings, on the parched lawn in the storm of snowy seeds that blow from the cottonwood trees, in empty classrooms, or in the low-rent bars that surround the university.

After several days of casual observation and many hours of intense conversation, I am impressed by how ordinary most of them seem. Diagnosis is at best a tricky business; outside a clinical setting it is especially problematic. Still, it seems fair to say that the vast majority of these people just aren't crazy. However incredible their UFO experience seems, and whatever it might actually be, it is not in any obvious way the product of serious psychopathology. They have been going about their business, making a living, bearing and raising children, having friends, taking vacations. When we talk, they are coherent and thoughtful, flexible rather than fanatic, and in good emotional contact with me. Though they have come to certain tentative conclusions, they are just as likely as I am to wonder exactly what it is that has happened to them.

These UFO experiencers do not have the obvious thought disorder—the loose associations and blocked mental functioning—of the schizophrenic. Aside from their UFO experiences, which most clinicians would probably locate halfway between delusion and fantasy, they don't have ideas that could be called particularly odd or paranoid. And their attitude toward their UFO experiences is neither flatly indifferent nor anxiously preoccupied. Even the few who are concerned that they may have been left with an "implant" to monitor their behavior (certainly, hearing this must raise anyone's suspicions about paranoia) treat the possibility in a way that seems different from the ideas of paranoid people I have known: they're not at all sure it's true, and they know it sounds crazy, but if it is true, they are willing to accept it as if it were part of some annoying, possibly insulting, but unavoidable service that they must perform.

Some studies of UFO experiencers, notably one by the psychologist Kenneth Ring, suggest that they have a higher than normal incidence of abuse in their childhood. This is important, partly because early abuse seems to predispose people to use dissociation as a defense against painful feelings, and dissociation is the defense mechanism responsible for the development of multiple personalities. In theory, it is possible that they have an as yet undescribed form of multiple personality disorder, in which the separate personality has UFO "experiences" that may be accessed by hypnosis but are otherwise inaccessible. Early abuse, particularly sexual abuse, is also thought by some to be the cause of UFO-abduction memo-

ries: "It's not my parents who abused me, but the aliens." This is a plausible explanation that surely needs further study. However, none of the twelve people I interviewed in depth reported childhood sexual abuse, nor have I ever seen or heard of people diagnosed with multiple personality who produced such an alternate personality.

Nor do most of these people appear particularly "fantasy prone," as some have suggested UFO experiencers would be. With a few obvious exceptions, they are not histrionic and are more inclined to qualify their statements or question the meaning of their experiences than to exaggerate or elaborate on them. Even those who presumably would be eager to "remember" an abduction or a contact experience—committed UFO buffs whose lives would, one imagines, be enriched by the drama and attention—tend to be shy about telling their stories. Finally, these UFO experiencers do not seem to be using the experience to manipulate others, gain publicity, or make money. Most have asked for anonymity.

These people have some other things in common. Most have thought of themselves as "different" since childhood. And often this difference has taken the form of a precocious independence and self-reliance, an ongoing concern with life's mystery and meaning and purpose. They seem as a group to be particularly empathic with other people and often with animals. In spite of all this, however, they tend as adults to be very concerned with maintaining boundaries in their interpersonal relationships and control in their professional lives.

They wonder, after they recover "memories" of their encounters, why they aren't more afraid—the reported nocturnal visits often seem to persist—but many find they are actually less fearful than before. They feel they have learned lessons, about their own vulnerability and the earth's, that allow them to give up the illusion of personal control and to realize that they really may be, as Sprinkle has said, cosmic citizens. Sitting among them, I am sometimes reminded of the shamans I have met and studied around the world. Like their "primitive" counterparts, these UFO experiencers believe they have been taken on disorienting journeys out of ordinary time and space into a realm where "sky beings" torture, dismember, or otherwise irrevocably alter them. Returning to their daily lives, many feel strangely hopeful as well as deeply disturbed, reborn as well as wounded, and, often enough, powerfully committed to a healing vocation.

At the Rocky Mountain Conference, Leo Sprinkle and June Parnell are encouraging people to turn their UFO experience—whatever it may have been or may be—into this kind of transformative journey. They provide a safe place in which people can be guided, a point of view that reassures them that they are not crazy, tools they can use to continue to work on themselves, and a supportive network of contacts. They acknowledge the difficulties of the journey, do not judge its manifestations, and reassure the voyagers that it is navigable. □

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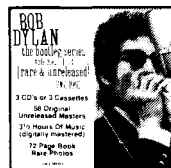
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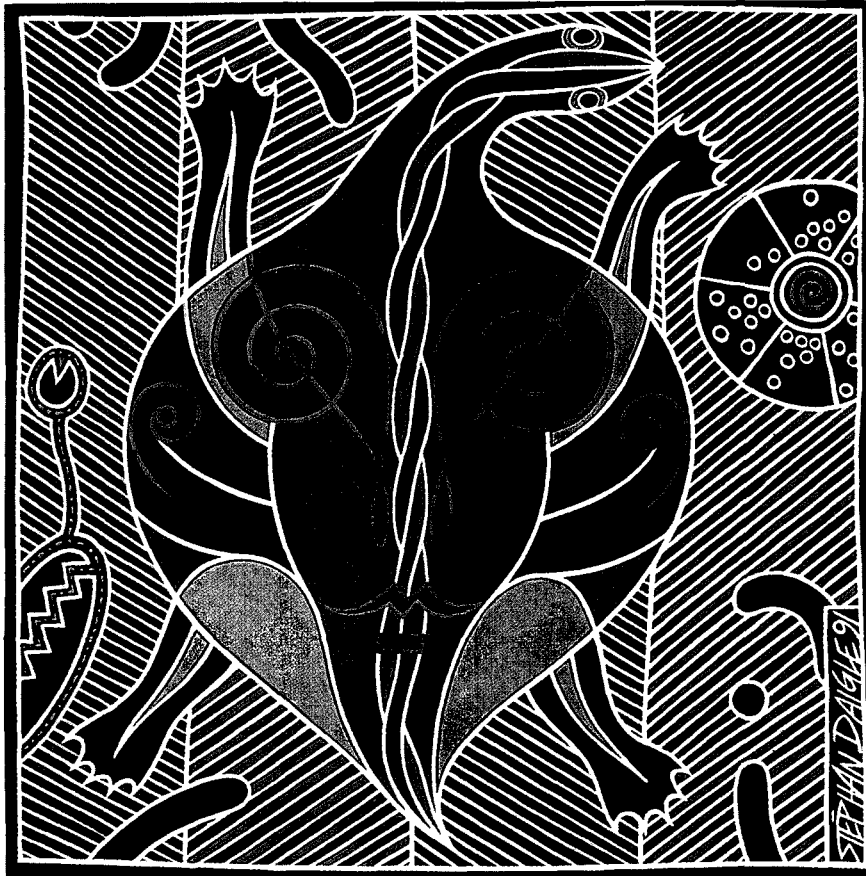
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New Worlds, Old Wildernesses

Peter Sculthorpe and the ecology of music

by Wilfrid Mellers

THE GAGADJU TRIBE has lived in northern Australia, in the vast area that is now Kakadu National Park, for more than 40,000 years. Initially they were a handsome, healthy people succored by a mostly benign environment. The white man's advent put an end to that, through both cruel rapacity and diseases of body and soul unwittingly inflicted. Today only a few very elderly speakers of the Gagadju language survive; when they die, their mostly oral traditions—the myths that connect them to nature and the earth—will perish with them. No longer will their “song lines” mark the footpaths of the ancestors who, in

the remote dream time of antiquity, wandered over the immense continent, naming in song everything they saw—bird, beast, insect, plant, rock, or water hole—and so *singing* the world into existence.

Images of emptiness and space have pervaded the Australian visual arts for almost a century. Painters such as Sidney Nolan and Russell Drysdale were internationally celebrated well before Australian writers had or deserved worldwide esteem. Nowadays we honor several fine Australian poets, including A. D. Hope, Judith Wright, and Les Murray, and one novelist, Patrick White, whose novels are aboriginal Australian

in theme and verbal rhythm while also being profoundly disturbing testaments about the modern world. Moreover, there is now evidence that Australian music is beginning to discover the universal within the topical and local.

In this respect Peter Sculthorpe may be one of the most important living composers, wherever he may stand in the greatness stakes. Sculthorpe, who now lives in Sydney, was born on Australia's farthest edge, in Tasmania, a region that is geographically and climatically similar to the old country whence came the original settlers—mostly convicts who, if not the scum of the earth they were often dismissed as, were certainly outsiders in the civilizations of Europe. The settlers were bemused, even rebellious, in their new world, since they knew neither where they stood nor where they were going. The more aware among them, especially the artists, fretted to get back to Europe. Even Sculthorpe, who, born in 1929, was late enough to profit from a slowly evolving antipodal tradition, felt the need, having graduated from Melbourne University, to study in England, and at Oxford at that. In so ancient an environment so far from home he discovered his true identity. He began to create a music distinctively Australian, and although there is now an impressive corps of Australian composers, none rivals Sculthorpe in revealing a national identity that is also pertinent to any listener.

Two apprentice works from Sculthorpe's pre-Oxford days merit mention, both for their intrinsic quality and for their prophetic nature. The Piano Sonatina of 1954 has a classical title, and on the page betrays affinities with contemporary European music, especially the spikily economic textures of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*. Even so, the piece is not in sonata form, nor is it parasitic. On the contrary, it is in tune with Sculthorpe's verbal description: “For the journey of Yoonecara to the land of his forefathers, and the return to his tribe.” This is what Sculthorpe's music tends to be about—life in a rootless world which has lost touch with the earth as well as its human forebears. Although the Piano Sonatina wasn't a conscious attempt to create a literate aboriginal music, its sounds and structures come out as aboriginal in that the work functions not by development, like a Western sonata, but by the juxta-

position of tersely delineated figures.

In the following year Sculthorpe wrote a piece far more significant to his future. *Irkanda I* is an "ancient chant" scored for solo violin, stringed instruments being ones that the composer associates with human expressivity. The piece works by accretion, as tiny "cells"—two or three intervals—slowly mutate. Melodically, the technique is one of incremental repetition: rhythmically, syncopations, extensions, and truncations are energetic but go nowhere; harmonically, progression is again evaded by the prevalence of drones and ostinatos. Some Sculthorpe fingerprints—wailing minor and major seconds, oscillations between diminished fourths or major and minor thirds, microtones, glissandos, shivery tremolandos, and unreal harmonics—have parallels in Bloch's and Bartók's string writing, though the perfervid dolor of either is poles apart from Sculthorpe's forlorn evocation of the self in the wilderness.

"*Irkanda*" is an aboriginal word meaning "a remote and lonely place," and *Irkanda I* initiated a series that climaxed in part four, which was a landmark in Sculthorpe's evolution. *Irkanda IV*, scored for solo violin, string orchestra, and percussion, was composed in 1961, immediately after Sculthorpe's return from Oxford to Launceston, where he had been born and where his father was dying. The piece is about death, in that it is a requiem for his father and for the past his family stood for, but also in that it is a relinquishment of Europe; in the music several European ghosts are laid, Bloch among them, and Mahler's threnody for the old world is also obliquely recalled. The music expresses a deep human distress. This may be why Sculthorpe had to embark during the sixties on a series of pieces radically different from the *Irkandas*.

Sun Musics I-IV established Sculthorpe's reputation beyond Australia, probably because they were scored for full orchestra. (Peter Sculthorpe's music is published by Faber Music, Ltd., in London, with U.S. representation by Faber Music, Inc., in Winchester, Massachusetts.) The self is momentarily denied as the orchestra becomes a gigantic percussion instrument, for which there was a precedent in Stravinsky's once notorious *Rite of Spring*. Sculthorpe's more direct debt was to

Edgard Varèse, and he thereby synthesized impulses from the old world and the new. For Varèse was a Frenchman who, having settled in New York in 1916, created a revolutionary music that abandoned Western progress in favor of quasi-architectural blocks of sound. Varèse carried the legacy of Debussy's static harmony, fragmented lyricism, and impressionist color into the harsh milieu of industrial New York, discovering analogies between mechanical engineering (in which he had been trained) and the presumptively eternal laws of nature. His music offers a formidable alternative to the vagaries of human passion, at once harking back to linear and metrical procedures typical of so-called primitive music and looking forward to the mathematically preordained structures of electronics. The relevance of this to Sculthorpe's preoccupations is patent. Whereas in the *Irkandas* we have a music of the individual alone in space and time, the *Sun Musics* present a world devoid of human population, except insofar as the quasi-visual sounds come to us by courtesy of the composer's listening ear and watching eye. The outback's sun is not benign.

The visual quality of the *Sun Musics* bears on the fact that during the sixties Sculthorpe was fascinated by another kind of otherness: that of Asian musics, especially Japanese and Balinese. Such musics were at least geographically less remote from Australia than was Western music, and their philosophical implications what the historian and mythologist Mircea Eliade has called the "paradise of archetypes and repetition" typical of aboriginal and other tribal musics. It is not fortuitous that whereas many melodic strands in the *Sun Musics* are affiliated with aboriginal chant, others are based on Japanese court incantation. What this might mean is suggested by a work Sculthorpe composed in 1968, a wind quintet with percussion called *Tabuh Tabuhan*, a Balinese title that means "all kinds of gamelan music"—a gamelan being an orchestra of drums, gongs, and resonating percussion instruments, into which voices and flutes occasionally intrude. Like the American Colin McPhee and the Englishman Benjamin Britten, Sculthorpe adapts the non-evolutionary pentatonicism, the seductive sonorities, and the formal repetitiveness of Balinese gamelan

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The Arabs of Israel

Are they a "persecuted minority"?

The papers and television bring us daily reports about the happenings in the areas administered by Israel—Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip, and the allegedly poor treatment the Arabs receive at the hands of the Israeli authorities. Leaving the administered territories to future analysis, it is of interest to consider the status of Arab citizens in Israel proper.

What are the facts?

■ Israel is a democratic country—an open, pluralistic, and egalitarian society. Different religions, cultures, and social traditions co-exist. Protection of such diversity is embedded in Israel's traditions and confirmed by the government. Seventeen per cent of the total population (700,000 people) are non-Jews, most of them Arabs, and some Druze. Like all other Israeli citizens, they have full rights to vote and to hold elective office. Both Arabs and Druze hold seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Every Knesset, since the founding of the state in 1948, has had Arab and Druze members. All transactions in the Knesset are simultaneously translated into Arabic, and Arab members may address the Knesset in Arabic.

■ It is official policy of the Israeli government to foster the language, culture, and traditions of the Arab minority, in the educational system and in daily life. Arabic is an official language in Israel, together with Hebrew. Israel's Arabic press is the most vibrant and independent of any country in the region: there are more than 20 Arabic periodicals. They publish what they please, subject only to the same military censorship as Jewish publications. There are daily TV and radio programs in Arabic. Arabic is taught in Jewish secondary schools. Israeli universities are renowned centers of learning in the history and literature of the Arab Middle East.

■ Education and literacy of the Arab population in Israel is as high and probably higher than in any Arab country. The literacy rate among Israeli Arabs is 95%, virtually the same as for Israeli Jews. There are some 700 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with about 200,000 students—17 times as many as in 1948, when the State of Israel was created. 90% of Arab children attend school, probably the highest ratio of any Arab population anywhere. Israeli

universities and technical institutions are freely available to the Arabs. About 3,000 Arab students attend such schools.

■ All religious communities in Israel enjoy the full protection of the State. Israeli Arabs—Moslems, as well as many Christian denominations—are free to exercise their faiths, to observe their own weekly day of rest and holidays, and to administer their own internal affairs. Each community has its own religious councils and courts, and has full jurisdiction over religious affairs, including matters of personal status, such as marriage and divorce. The holy sites of all religions are administered by their own authorities and protected by the government.

■ In contrast to the non-Israeli Arab world, Arab women in Israel enjoy the same status as men. Israeli law grants women equal rights, including the right to vote and to be elected to public office, prohibits polygamy and child marriage, and has thus vastly changed the status of women, to far above that of any country in the region. Israeli health standards are by far the highest in the Middle East. Israeli health institutions are freely open to all Arabs, on the same basis as they are to Jews.

■ There is, however one difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews in Israel. Israeli and Druze men are required to do three years of military service and then serve one month every year until they are 50. Arabs are exempted from military duty and are not required to perform any compensating civilian service. Since the surrounding Arab states, with the recent exception of Egypt, are the avowed enemies of Israel and are dedicated to its destruction, this exemption is granted by the Israeli Government to its Arab citizens, so as to spare them conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

Contrary to propaganda and to what many believe, the Arabs in Israel are full-fledged citizens, enjoy every civil right, and have the same status in law as Jewish Israelis. In summary, they enjoy the highest standards of living and liberty of any Arabs in the Middle East. It is instructive and sobering to compare the condition of the approximately 700,000 Arabs in Israel with that of the pitiful remnants of Jewry in Arab countries. Jews have been living in Arab countries for almost 2000 years. Under Arab dominance, they were always third-class citizens and subject to harassment and to persecution. There were about 900,000 Jews in Arab countries in 1948—now there are fewer than 25,000. But there are now 700,000 Arabs in Israel, as against 150,000 in 1948—a more than four-fold increase. These figures alone would seem to prove that things can't be all that bad for Arabs in Israel.

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music to his own ends, but he does not, as the Californian Lou Harrison does, adhere to the traditional, complex tunings. This may be why the piece creates, in Sculthorpe's words, "sensuous, relaxed pleasure," and remains a light, slight piece that offers momentary escape from the terrors of the wilderness by way of daydreaming. Sculthorpe's orientalism becomes a means by which he may temper the stress and distress of his ritual mourning. This is evident in his works of the late sixties and early seventies, for which, significantly, he returned to writing for strings.

Three fine string quartets date from these years, but perhaps the most impressive work is the large-scale Sonata for Strings, written in 1978. No more than the early Piano Sonatina is it formally a sonata, though it springs from a dualism: the movements of aboriginal dance interlock with almost static sections that the composer calls chorales. Neither mobile dance nor immobile chorale progresses or wants to progress. Alternation, rather than altercation, creates an eternal present that might resemble minimalism were it not for the constituent materials, which are maximal in melodic, rhythmic, and even harmonic charge. Texturally, the dance sections are tough and dense, and they impel the Zen-style chorales into a realm more intense than passive relaxation.

IF ONE POLE of the Sculthorpe experience tends to be meditative and solitary, another embraces the everyday world—much as Patrick White precariously balances his Australian explorers, saints, simpletons, and other oddballs against the natter of suburbia. This lighter aspect of Sculthorpe's work centers on his music for documentary film, out of which he has fashioned several concert pieces. The most substantial, *Port Essington*, composed in 1977, orchestrally tells the tale of a settlement begun in 1838 and finally abandoned in 1849, essentially because the white man couldn't adapt to nature's exigencies. The work opens with the bush itself and leads into a set of variations on an aboriginal melody that changes identity as it fuses the age-old world of the natives with that of the settlers, who play pastiche nineteenth-century salon music, represented by the mindless twittering of a

would-be-genteel string trio. Song, indigenously colored or white and alien, is sundered by harmonic disruptions and metrical dislocations until only the bush is left. It is not a matter of "good" natives against "bad" settlers; the drawing-room music rends the heart, partly because the tune is so haunting and partly because its realization is so luminously frail as to sound unreal and even faintly ridiculous. Not only the aborigines are defeated; in this case the white man, too, sounds pathetically vulnerable. The evolution of the piece—from the empty land to its indigenous population, to the approaching aliens, to the movement titled "the Estrangement," and so again to emptiness—is a myth of the human psyche, as well as a potted history of Australia.

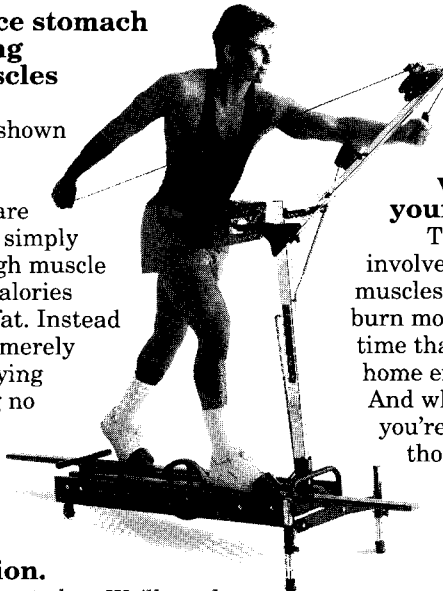
Sculthorpe reached artistic maturity during the 1980s, mostly in orchestral works. A significant prelude, however, was the *Requiem* for solo cello of 1979, a piece that, being for a solo string instrument, harks back to *Irkanda I*. Consciously fusing the antipodal and the European, the music demonstrates that there is no necessary division between ritual mourning in the Roman Catholic Church and in an aboriginal tribe. Death is indivisible, and the cello *Requiem*, starting with quotations from the Roman rite, evolves into aboriginal incantation—undulating by step, reaching up through the godly fourth and fifth—and implicitly into mourning for any human being, any time, any place.

In the same year as the cello *Requiem*, a work fusing individual and collective destiny, Europe and Australia, Sculthorpe created an orchestral piece that has claim to being his masterwork. Its title is *Mangrove*, but the composer tells us that the music is descriptive neither of mangroves nor of watery swamps. It is rather a *recherche du temps perdu*: time spent among mangroves, but more specifically in Sidney Nolan's rain forests, haunted by the convict Bracewell and his lover Eliza Fraser, about whom Patrick White wrote his marvelous novel *A Fringe of Leaves*. Memories of a beach, mangrove-free, at Ise, in Japan, also intrude, and so do "thoughts of a New Guinea tribe that believe men and women to be descended from mangroves." This would seem to embrace every aspect of Sculthorpe's experience.

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Answers to the July Puzzler

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"KANGAROOS"

Passenger letters in the diagram spell "Go joey riding." Across. 1. S(P)IGOT 5. FI(SH)ER 9. TART (double def.) 11. REPAVE (Eva Peron rev. — on) 12. A(C)-IDLY 14. RING (double def.) 15. SE(S)SION (noises rev.) 16. PARK-A 17. A-U-DIT 19. FUN-D 21. T(REF)OIL 22. I-N(UR)ED (end anag.) 25. DECOY (hidden) 27. BARD (homophone) 31. ATLAS(t) 32. CUR-LED 33. GEES(e) 34. STRAND (double def.) 35. L(UP)INE 36. SU(IT)E 37. E(AS)ELS 38. SINNED (rev.) Down. 1. S(T)ASH 2. IRIS-H 3. GODSON (anag.) 4. T-ROUT 5. FOND(a) 6. SPRAT (rev.) 7. HAIR-DO (homophone) 8. RE(A-L)LY 10. ACE-TONE 13. SP-ED 18. VIOL-ET 19. FI(N)ALE 20. D(u)RESS 23. JULE(P)S 24. DR-USES 26. END RU-N (anag. + N) 27. BAS(I)E 28. A-CHE'S 29. PLAN(e) 30. A(DDE)D

The composer omitted woodwinds and harp from his orchestra, lest they tempt him to over-obvious water noises. The scoring he decided on conforms to his habitual instrumental symbolism, in which the strings are humanly expressive and the brasses tend to be nonhuman, emulating the wilder forces of nature. We are not allowed to forget, however, that "human" and "bestial" are relative terms that overlap; percussion links the two, acting as a continuum within which we live. The first section is a startling rendering of creature speech in which trombones, trumpets, and horns grunt, growl, gibber, and bark, driven to orgasmic ardor by accumulative percussion. The climax is echoed by sighs on muted strings, as if nature's hurly-burly were too much for us; this leads into a string chant, aspiring to human identity. Growing from the familiar stepwise undulation, this chant, at first uttered by cellos, fulfills the same function as the plainsong quotations in the *Requiem*, only this time it is based on a Japanese court tune. It imparts no flavor of exoticism, any more than the Christian incantation of the *Requiem* renders it European. The rudimentary themes are literally aboriginal in springing from the acoustical bases of melody. At the final climax the strings wail their original sighs, no longer muted but largamente, *con desiderio d'amore*, leading into a recapitulation of the Japanese chant, now sonorously sung by the "bestial" brasses through sustained diatonic chords on the strings.

After the paradoxically lucid savagery of *Mangrove* it isn't surprising that Sculthorpe's jubilation should embrace something not far from fury, in the 1986 *Earth Cry*. But although ritual mourning for the plight of the land and its first inhabitants is still pervasive in this large orchestral work, the long, slow coda attains authentic and potentially universal grandeur. This is fulfilled in another of Sculthorpe's large-scale pieces, when power and praise transcend lament.

Kakadu (1988) was inspired by romantic love, for it was commissioned by an American admirer of Sculthorpe's music, Emanuel Papper, as a birthday present for his wife. The title refers to the national park that is the traditional home of the now nearly extinct Gadjadju tribe. The opening section of the

work reanimates the tribe's forgotten rituals in fast motor rhythms and non-developing harmonies, the tune naggingly evolving by stepwise movement in syncopated meters, driven by pounding percussion. The chant incrementally gathers momentum, reaching climax in a mode that cannot decide whether its root is F or C. That there is desperation in the joyousness testifies to the fact that for the aborigines this power is retrospective; and the point is given another twist in a middle section based on an undulating English-horn solo representing Dr. Papper himself—one human being within nature's cosmos. That modern man is alone in the jungle is indicated when the human song is disrupted by a babel of birds and beasts, naturalistically imitated not merely by freak techniques on strings but by the whole orchestra.

These nonhuman chatterings become a trigger to human fulfillment. Whatever the fate of the aborigines, modern man learns something from nature as man, in the person of Dr. Papper, is purged by the birds; as a wise wit put it, for Sculthorpe even more than for Messiaen the paraclete is a parakeet. When Dr. Papper's melody returns, it serves as the bridge to a section in which modern man and nature confront a proleptic vision of the aboriginal dream time redeemed. The strings sing a chant from Arnhem Land, known as "Djilile," or "Whistling Duck"—a stepwise-moving melody that enchants with its gentle flow. The tune seems to have become for Sculthorpe synonymous with dream time; he has used it frequently, and has made a beautiful version for solo piano. In *Kakadu* it murmurs faintly, as an immemorial backdrop to Dr. Papper's tune, which is the hazardously hopeful present. This time the accommodation between modern man and his remote predecessors leads to a consummation: when the fast ritual dance returns, the human chant is transferred to reverberating horns, and simultaneously the birds and beasts chortle on improvising strings.

IN ASSESSING Sculthorpe's stature it is helpful to think of him in relation to two American composers whose influence he has acknowledged. As an artist eschewing civilized traditions in order to begin again, Sculthorpe resembles Varèse, though he doesn't dis-

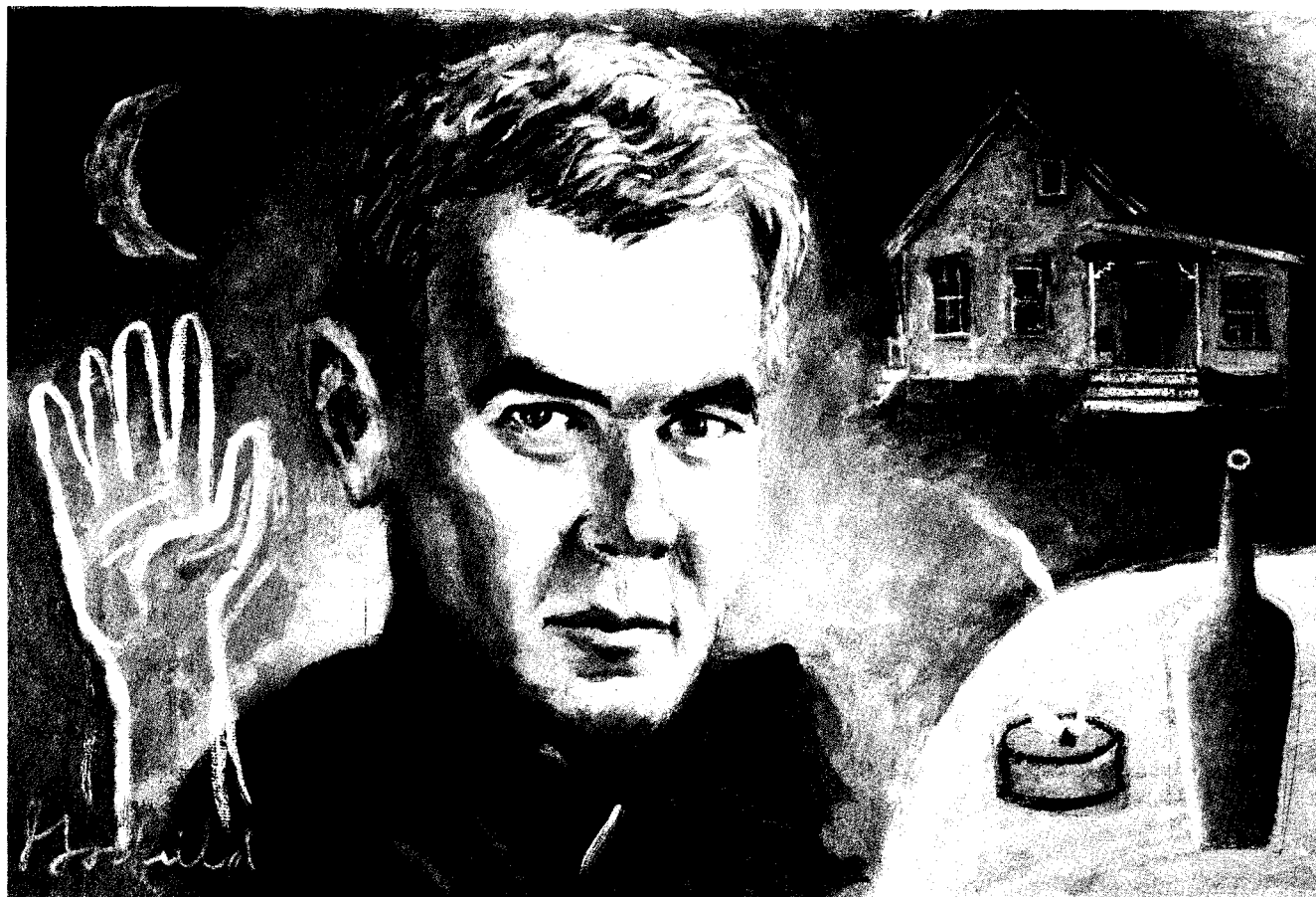
play the alarming aboriginality that informed Varèse's few but stunning creations of seventy years back, and the parallel is not exact. Varèse was an outsider who, having delivered his frontal assault, relapsed into silence. Sculthorpe has gone on, attempting to integrate his aboriginality into modern life, where it might affect everyday discourse. In this respect there is a closer parallel between Sculthorpe's position today and that occupied a generation ago by Aaron Copland, who, born in Brooklyn at the turn of the century and living in the heart of industrial New York, asked a crucial question: Shall these bones live? In the blue notes influenced by jazz, the declamation from the Jewish synagogue, the harsh metallic sonorities, and the rigid geometric serialism of the Piano Variations of 1930 Copland gave a painfully affirmative answer, and he went on to establish an American tradition in which pioneer values of toughness, endurance, and audacity find place also for hope, homespun humor, serendipity, and even tenderness.

Sculthorpe offers a comparable testament for our time. He has always lived in cities, but his affirmation is wrung from a machine civilization's impotence in the face of the Australian emptiness. In its day Copland's Americanism spoke on behalf of the entire industrialized world. In our day Sculthorpe's making music of ecological issues brings home the acuteness of our present (in)human predicament. How far may we still be succored by our entrenched, too-long-civilized past? How empty are we or, provisionally, ought we to be? As our pluralistic society breaks barriers, we must acknowledge that for spiritual survival we need other cultures no less than they, for material survival, need us. The words of the seventeenth-century mystic Jakob Boehme reflect an even deeper level:

No people understands any more the sensual language, and the birds in the air and the beasts in the forests do understand it according to their species. Therefore man may reflect what he has been robbed of, and what he is to recover in the Second Birth, for in the Second Coming all spirits will speak with one another.

Peter Sculthorpe's *Mangrove* glimpses that second coming, beyond however distant a rainbow. □

Books



Raymond Carver: Our Stephen Crane

Reflections on the life and art of an American storyteller

by Russell Banks

THE OCCASION for these thoughts is the publication of . . . *when we talk about Raymond Carver* (edited by Sam Halpert, Peregrine Smith Books, Gibbs Smith, Publisher, P.O. Box 667, Layton, Utah 84041, \$17.95), a collection of interviews with some of the friends and family of the revered storyteller and poet, who died of cancer at the age of fifty in August of 1988. As is clear from the last stories of *Where I'm Calling From* (1988) and the poems of *A New Path to the Waterfall* (1989), Carver when he died was writing at the height of his powers, and it

was widely agreed then that he had already made a major contribution to American literature. . . . *when we talk about Raymond Carver* is not part of that contribution, of course, but it's not meant to be. It's in fact a kind of wake, a night-long vigil kept over the body during the cold, dark hours that lie between death and burial. Appropriately, and happily, it's an old-fashioned Irish kind of wake, in which dear friends and family members gather and recollect and tell stories and lies, make their confessions and renew loyalties, offer toasts and sing songs of praise and la-

mentation, one hard upon another. Together, they conspire somehow to keep the beloved man around a little longer, fixing him vividly in language (most of the interviewees are themselves writers) before memory fades and all we have of him is the work itself, his marvelous stories and poems.

Which, to be sure, is all we're entitled to. But it's the lasting beauty of those stories and poems that explains the publication of such a book. Wakes are normally private affairs, and Carver himself, although candid and direct

when interviewed or when writing about his life and work, was a very private man. He was also, however, a writer of the first rank, one of the most admired and imitated storywriters in decades, perhaps since Ernest Hemingway, and in America we usually try to unlock the mystery of art by poking through the ordinary details of the artist's daily life. Worse (or better, depending on your perspective), many of Carver's stories, like Hemingway's, blur the distinction between his private life and the life of his fiction. He was not a fabulist or romancer; he was at bottom an old-fashioned realist who built his stories and poems with bricks and blocks made from the concrete details of his first-hand experiences, and he told them through plainspoken narrators who often sound like the man their author was reputed to be—a recovering alcoholic from the rural Northwest, a man who'd been poor all his life and had held a hundred mind-numbing jobs, who'd had a turbulent long-term marriage that he'd gotten into at nineteen, who with his wife had raised two children in trailers, dingy apartments, and other people's unused houses, who'd found success, sobriety, and personal happiness late, who had a gift for friendship, who loved fishing, who smoked and smoked and smoked.

Inevitably, then, such stories and poems as Carver's invite inquiry and speculation about the life of the author, feeding a reductive curiosity that perhaps magnifies the importance of the life and, insofar as it sidesteps its mystery, can diminish our reading of the work. Fine fiction writers themselves, Richard Ford and Tobias Wolff, while offering fond recollections of the man and testifying ably to their enormous respect and admiration for Carver in their interviews here, seem especially eager not to contribute to any reductive reading of the work; they both successfully deflect questions and sound in the process slightly (if justifiably) testy when the interviewer, Sam Halpert, persists in making literal-minded connections between actual people and events from Carver's private life and fictional characters and scenes from his stories and poems. More amiably, Robert Stone in his interview does the same as Ford and Wolff. Other contributors, like Leonard Michaels, tend to defeat the thrust

of the questions by talking more about themselves than about Raymond Carver. Family members—brother-in-law and novelist Douglas Unger and Carver's ex-wife, Maryann—seem interested mainly in correcting the record, getting the dates and events and witnesses straight. They affectionately recall the artist as an ambitious young writing student, husband, father, friend, and brother-in-law, focusing, in Maryann's case, on the years before he was overwhelmed by the troubles associated with heavy drinking and before he saved himself in his late thirties through Alcoholics Anonymous, the dedicated companionship of the poet Tess Gallagher, and the great acclaim that came then. Looking back twenty-five years, Maryann Carver says, "We were young, and we loved good times. And when we didn't have friends over, Ray and I had our own party every single night of our lives. At the end of the day, when we completed our jobs and work at school and finished with the children, we'd get together for a cup of coffee, talk over the day, and laugh. Ray was a very funny man, and we were funny together."

... *when we talk about Raymond Carver* gives us many such loving portraits; in fact, it's slightly, and needlessly, hagiographic. But with good reason (and for the writers, with a certain amount of understandable self-interest) most of the people interviewed for this book are particularly sensitive to the ease with which we misread literature by reading it through the refracting glass of the author's life. Carver's work, more than most (except possibly Hemingway's, again), has suffered from that misreading—although not since Chekhov has an author's *good* nature been so much celebrated after his death. Usually we move in the opposite direction, digging up dirt and scandal, ferreting out weaknesses and foibles, elucidating failures of character that cushion our feelings of inadequacy in the face of the tough morality of the work. There's little of that here, however.

Regardless, whether we degrade the author or enshrine him, the result is a misreading of the work that cannot but diminish it. Carver's essential sweetness, decency, and humility, his very naturalness, used as a gloss on his stories and poems, can make it difficult to see these brilliantly conceived and ex-

ecuted works of art in terms of their intellectually demanding themes and their disciplined darkness. It's easier to think they're about *him*, not us, to think they're autobiography, not moral history, transcription, not art.

I MIGHT TAKE A moment to speak of a second way to misread the work which is even more pernicious than the autobiographical fallacy, for Carver's writing, especially his fiction, has suffered from it as well. We could call it the brand-name fallacy. It comes from the desires and needs of the publishing industry and its flacks to create niches and schools of fiction, establishing every few years a "new thing," such as minimalism, K-mart fiction, or dirty realism, so that when sales start to fall, the package can quickly be turned into the "old thing," making room on the charts and shelves for . . . what? Brat pack gothic, I suppose.

Packaging, or brand-naming, makes for disposable literature and steady-state marketing. In the case of Carver, by naming him a minimalist or a dirty realist, we stuff him into a sack with a batch of writers whose fiction has little or nothing to do with his. Though these writers for the most part suffer from the comparison with Carver, by lumping them together we invite the reader to take the best of them only as seriously as we take the least. (It's never the other way around, unfortunately.) Thus do we remark the rural blue-collar characters, the post-modern loneliness and alienation of their lives, the flattened plain style of the prose, the absence of authorial intrusion or affect, the use of elliptical dialogue and homely details, and the affinity for obliqueness, non sequiturs, and missed signals. We think we have the stories down. And, consequently, we miss (or perhaps *avoid* is better) the moral rigor and risk of such fine stories as Carver's "Chef's House" and "So Much Water So Close to Home," and daintily sidestep the wordless communion of "Fat" and "Why Don't You Dance?" We withhold ourselves from the ceremony, the amazing transcendence, of "A Small, Good Thing," and spare ourselves the painful confrontation with death in "Whoever Was Using This Bed" and "Errand."

These are great stories, and there are more, all of them stories that defeat categorization and can be compared

only to the best work of the half-dozen American masters of the short story in this century. I'm thinking of John Cheever, Flannery O'Connor, Eudora Welty, Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway, and Stephen Crane. Make your own list if you want, but regardless of who's on it, I think you'll agree that there are as many as ten or twelve stories by Raymond Carver that place him securely in the company of writers destined to be read by our grandchildren.

To say that his fiction falls into three styles or periods is perhaps too narrowly exact and may seem arbitrary, especially since Carver was constantly revising, retitling, and republishing his work. Like so many of his narrators, who obsessively return to their pasts to dredge up some old sin of commission or omission and re-enact and re-evaluate it—as if by staring hard enough at the past they might improve the present and shape the future—Carver was always reconsidering his earlier work and, whenever possible, bringing it into line with his later views and needs. For instance, "So Much Water So Close to Home," "Dummy," and "Distance," from the 1977 book *Furious Seasons*, are later pared down, *stripped* down, actually, and darkened and published again in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, with "Dummy" now titled "The Third Thing That Killed My Father Off," "Distance" called "Everything Stuck to Him," and "So Much Water So Close to Home" reduced to half its original length. These are not merely early and late incarnations of the same story; the author has rethought the whole point of his story, so that by taking a new bearing on the world, by lining up on a different star and horizon, he has made different stories altogether.

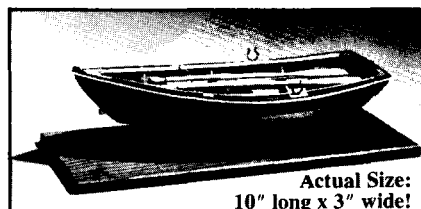
Even so, it's not difficult to mark out three stages in the evolution of Carver's fiction, with the first being his early, lyrical, if somewhat tentative and "experimental" work, leading up to and including the stories of *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please* (1976) and *Furious Seasons*; the second being the middle period of tightening and constriction, stories of elision and silence, brought to a radical, astringent departure from the conventions of exposition and narrative with the collection *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981); and the third beginning with the expansive, digressive, more

redemptive stories of *Cathedral* (1983) and ending with his masterly Chekhovian (there's no other word for it) homage to Chekhov, "Errand," and the new and once again revised stories of his last collection, *Where I'm Calling From*.

IT STRIKES ME that at bottom Carver resembles no writer so much as Stephen Crane. Of course, both wrote excellent poetry as well as the fiction for which they are better known, and although both won wide acclaim in their lifetimes, they wrote from outside and deliberately against bourgeois taste and attitude. And both died relatively young. But more to the point, the work of both men is powered by the dramatization of a painful argument with a ferocious, inescapable determinism that, when at last it overpowers their characters, approaches tragedy. Crane's determinism is more Darwinian, perhaps, and his argument with it more romantically male and adolescent, than Carver's, in which fate seems locked on to the life-shaping power of the domestic mundane, the mess and grind of ordinary life, and Carver's argument against it is driven by love.

In her introduction to Carver's posthumous volume of poems, *A New Path to the Waterfall*, Tess Gallagher recalls: "An errand list I found in his shirt pocket later read 'eggs, peanut butter, hot choc' and then, after a space, 'Australia? Antarctica?'" How sweetly comical, and how like a Carver narrator's switch from the mundane to the high exotic, as if there were no escape from the grind of groceries except in fantasy; and because Carver presented the grind, even in a passing note to himself, as context for the pathetic and very specific fantasy of flight (*not* the same as a flight of fancy), the power of the mundane was strengthened, not diminished. It's as if the grocery list—his body's immediate needs—were in the Greek sense his fate.

The narrator in "Whoever Was Using This Bed," after being awakened at 3:00 A.M. by a wrong number, wants to sleep, but his wife has switched the light on; they will be up all night talking, compulsively approaching and veering away from the subject of their eventual aging and death and their ultimate aloneness.



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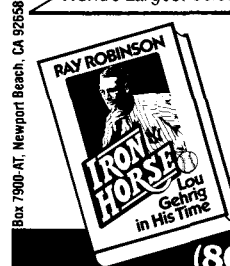
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Back in the bedroom I see she is smoking another cigarette. I see, too, that it's nearly four in the morning. I'm starting to worry. When it's four o'clock it'll soon be five o'clock, and then it will be six, then sixty, then time to get up for work. I lie back down, close my eyes, and decide I'll count to sixty, slowly, before I say anything else about the light.

In a fiction-writing workshop this shift from the concrete to the abstract in images of clock-time and light would be called a "strategy"; in reality it's the artistic expression of a moral and philosophical vision, and one sees this in practically every sentence Carver wrote, from his grocery lists to his most ambitious poems and stories.

He was a thinking writer who thought not about ideas but about the meaning of his life and the lives of the people who surrounded him. Elsewhere in her introduction Tess Gallagher mentions a passage Carver had marked in a book, *Unattainable Earth*, by a writer he admired, Czeslaw Milosz: "Jeanne, a disciple of Karl Jaspers, taught me the philosophy of freedom, which consists in being aware that a choice made now, today, projects itself backward and changes our past actions." Gallagher writes that the passage "may illuminate Ray's inner objectives," but his work actually indicates otherwise, suggesting strongly that he viewed Jaspers's notion as a dangerous fantasy and regarded it with sad detachment. Milosz's passage in fact continues,

That was the period of my harsh struggle against *delectatio morosa* to which I have always been prone. Monks suffering from *delectatio morosa* would plunge into meditation on their sins and found it a good way to shirk their daily tasks. The philosophy of freedom, practiced by existentialists, took over the classical methods of confessors and spiritual guides, precisely in that it advises us to direct our sight always ahead, not backwards. Largely thanks to its counsels, I stopped meditating and set about my work, which has always been to me an escape forward.

So many of Carver's characters, as if afflicted with *delectatio morosa* themselves, seem to be seeking just this sort of ersatz monkish freedom, giving to his stories their oddly retroactive action, the compulsive remorse that col-

ors the emotional lives of most of his characters, the confessional mode of narration, and the unusual absence of guilt. See his much-praised story "Intimacy," in particular, for an explicit but (to my mind) all too self-conscious and schematic dramatization of this theme. In his better stories, of course, the theme disappears behind the lives and consciousness of the characters, so that we're moved not by the ideas in the story but by the plight and struggle of its human beings. Carver's backward-gazing characters don't want forgiveness; they want a different past, and they want it because their present has become unbearable and they've learned that their future holds only death. Milosz's existential freedom and "work" (Just say "Yes!") are to Carver's radically alienated characters essentially meaningless, a cruel and ultimately exploitative joke.

In one of the few Carver stories narrated by a woman, "Chef's House," a man named Wes and his wife have briefly reunited after a period of pain and separation, caused mostly, one gathers, by Wes's addiction to alcohol. Indeed, he's ensconced in a borrowed house (Chef's) to dry out, and his estranged wife, who loves him still, has come to help him do it. She says to him,

Suppose, just suppose, nothing had ever happened. Suppose this was for the first time. Just suppose. It doesn't hurt to suppose. Say none of the other had ever happened. You know what I mean? Then what? I said.

Wes fixed his eyes on me. He said, Then I suppose we'd have to be somebody else if that was the case. Somebody we're not. I don't have that kind of supposing left in me. We were born who we are. Don't you see what I'm saying?

She's saying, "Australia? Antarctica??" And Wes's answer is "eggs, peanut butter, hot choc."

THE POEMS, TOO, have this theme of obsessive return and flight, a cycle generated by the conflict between the implacable, twinned power of time and the mundane and the inescapable human need to transcend them. And like the stories, the poems again and again show that to give oneself over without a struggle is, purely and simply, to forgo love.

Unlike most fiction writers, who turn now and then to verse, Carver

wrote poetry constantly, regardless of what else he was writing at the time. He was not an occasional poet. He seems to have understood the structure of lyric poetry and early on to have learned how to write it from inside, not composing it, as most fiction writers do, from outside. He knew the difference between a metaphor and a simile and that a conceit does not a poem make. He's more direct in his poems than in the stories, which is to say it's easier to confuse the author with the speaker of his poems, but he's no less metaphorical. For example, in "Locking Yourself Out, Then Trying to Get Back In," although using the plainest, most direct and concrete American English available, he extends a minor calamity to moral dimensions that would please a Puritan divine:

You simply go out and shut the door
without thinking. And when you
look back
at what you've done
it's too late. If this sounds
like the story of a life, okay.

The life, though, is *a* life and, in its mixture of morality and metaphysics, is a peculiarly American one, I think. As a native of one poor rural state and now a part-time resident of another, I instantly recognize and love and am terrified by the empty spaces, the stillness, and the stoicism of Raymond Carver's stories and poems. It's the same small-town American loneliness and bravery in the face of loneliness that I see in the paintings of Edward Hopper and also in the hooded faces, cigarettes, overhead light bulbs, and old shoes in the late paintings and drawings of Philip Guston. These pictures, like the fiction of Sherwood Anderson and Stephen Crane and Raymond Carver, like the best work of all our best artists and writers, are dramatized portraits of the pure products of America, which is why I think we have such a special affection for them and why, perhaps, they do not travel as well as some others do. But they—along with the blues, perhaps—tell our history, our only true story.

"The pure products of America go crazy," William Carlos Williams wrote, and for the most part it's true, or would be true if we did not have our own story straight. In Carver's bleak vision, literature is redemptive, briefly, momentarily, reconnecting us to one another, like an estranged wife and a wayward

husband meeting for a few weeks at Chef's house. Literature, all art that matters, makes it possible for us to bear witness to each other's life and death, enabling us thereby to enter history, where we gain dignity and live on. It's a pure gift, one to the other. Carver's narrator in the late story "Blackbird Pie," a man recently abandoned by his wife—that is, a man who has utterly lost his connection—tells us how to read all those stories about husbands and wives, friends and family, and he puts it beautifully:

It could be said, for instance, that to take a wife is to take a history. And if that's so, then I understand that I'm outside history now—like horses and fog. Or you could say that my history has left me. Or that I'm having to go on *without history*. Or that history will now have to do without me—unless my wife writes more letters, or tells a friend who keeps a diary, say. Then, years later, someone can look back on this time, interpret it according to the record, its scraps and tirades, its silences and innuendos. That's when it dawns on me that autobiography is the poor man's history. And that I am saying good-bye to history. Good-bye, my darling. □

Brief Reviews



THE BLUE MOUNTAIN by Meir Shalev. HarperCollins/Aaron Asher, \$22.95. The Feyge Levin Workingman's Circle consisted of Mirkin, Tsirkin, and Liberson, young Russian idealists, and Feyge Levin, the girl they picked up on their way to the founding of a pioneer cooperative settlement in Israel. The settlement was founded early in the century, and Mr. Shalev's novel describes its development over three generations. Viewed realistically, the village is a place where, aside from scattered Arab hostilities, nothing ever happens except squabbles, scandals, and hard work, while the pioneers



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Coming Next Month In The Atlantic



PRAIRYERTH

by William Least Heat-Moon

The best-selling author of *Blue Highways* returns to these pages with an evocation of the landscape, the weather, and the people of Chase County, Kansas (population 3,103): "The traditional hundredth meridian be damned," he writes. "At this latitude, the West starts here, obviously, definitively."



THE DECIPHERMENT OF ANCIENT MAYA

by David Roberts

As recently as 1960 little was known about the writing system of the greatest pre-Columbian civilization—the glyphs of the ancient Maya. During the past decades the situation has changed dramatically, owing to the efforts of a handful of young epigraphers, most of them American.



SOLE CUSTODY

by Lynna Williams

"Anna is flying to Chicago to kidnap, in a manner of speaking, the new baby of her ex-husband, Jay." A short story.

grow old and crotchety and die, many of the young drift away in search of an easier or more exciting life, and socialist principles wither. There is nothing realistic in Mr. Shalev's view of the place. His narrator, Baruch, is endowed with an imagination that converts events into a giddy mixture of zany comedy, folktale, and heroic fantasy, and possesses a style that glitters with unexpected juxtapositions and wild shifts from the practical to the impossible. All Mr. Shalev's characters, including Baruch, are more or less crazy, but they have the larger-than-life vitality of creatures from legend. They are entertaining company in or out of Baruch's graveyard, which contains "two hundred and seventy-four old men and women, one mandolin, and one old mule. . . . Pioneers, practicing idealists, and capitalist traitors."

AFRICAN SILENCES by Peter Matthiessen. *Random House, \$21.00.* Mr. Matthiessen's account of travels in equatorial Africa covers two visits, the first in the late 1970s, the second in 1986. His purpose was to observe conditions in the national wildlife parks of Senegal, Gambia, Ivory Coast, the Central African Republic, Gabon, and Zaire, and although what he saw makes discouraging reading for anyone concerned about the preservation of animals and rain forests, his adventures with erratic air transport, backwoods tribesmen, bumbling bureaucrats, and a malevolent mongoose range from frightening to funny. This is not the kind of travel book that arouses a wish to visit the area in question. The parks, underfunded and understaffed, were doing poorly on Mr. Matthiessen's first trip and generally less well on his second.

THE HUNT by Tamas Aczel. *Little, Brown, \$19.95.* Mr. Aczel's novel is set in the 1950s in an unnamed Eastern European country, but references to earlier social classifications and to "the admiral" indicate that the author is writing about his native Hungary. When the novel opens, the recently installed Prime Minister has invited three old associates to a hunting party at a splendid estate saved from proletarian utility for the pleasure of the Communist elite. The trio consists of Wulf, a disgraced general; Krolthy, the chief justice; and Beck, the ranking Catholic prelate. All three suspect that

their host, who has not turned up, is, as usual, plotting mischief, but have no idea whether they are to be victims or accomplices. While they wait, each reviews his past and his surrender to the temptations of power, or status, or mere comfortable survival, none of which, under their totalitarian regime, can be acquired except at the price of corruption. Interweaving past and present, shifting from one character to another, leaping from reality to dream and hallucination, Mr. Aczel creates, most convincingly, fifty years of political and moral decay. It is a grim story, but it is admirably written and pulls the reader along with a steady tug of suspense.

VICTOR HIGGINS by Dean A. Porter. *Gibbs Smith/University of Notre Dame, \$49.50.* Higgins (1884–1949) is described as "an American master," and he was indeed a master of the fierce light and sculptural contours of the Southwest, working for most of his career out of Taos, New Mexico. He officially belonged to the Taos Society of Artists but remained an unorthodox member, arranging his own shows and expanding his technique and subject matter while his colleagues tended to stick to the commercial safety of Indians, pueblos, and group exhibitions. He privately detested art dealers. He had a dry, testy wit, once remarking that "if Americans used the same judgment in banking investments as in art investments, the nation would have been bankrupt long ago." He was hardly a team player, and this fact may have contributed to the relative neglect of his work during the last twenty years of his life. Dr. Porter's sound biographical-critical text and the strikingly handsome illustrations in this book should bring Higgins a well-deserved revival of interest.

THE WAY OF THE TROUT by M. R. Montgomery. *Knopf, \$22.00.* "Fly fishermen," according to Mr. Montgomery, "preach to the converted and fraternize with the lodge brothers. This is a shame, for fly-fishing is a simple, pleasant, fascinating activity. . . ." His amiable, frequently amusing essays on the sport may not make the converts he hopes for, but anglers will find them most satisfactorily normal—the usual case of one fly-fisherman talking to, or at, another.

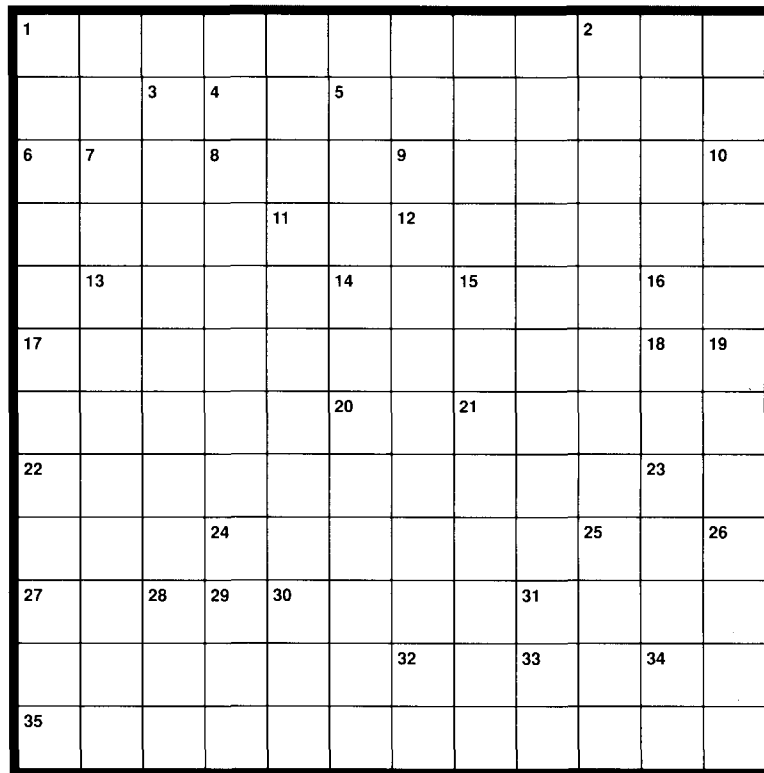
—Phoebe-Lou Adams

THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

RECT A A LUGN

Like the word RECTANGULAR above, each clue answer in this puzzle begins and ends on the same letter, and each is to be entered in the diagram so as to form a rectangle. Starting in its numbered square, an entry may first go left, right, up, or down; the numbered square may or may not be a corner of the rectangle eventually formed by the entry. Answers include three proper nouns.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 97.

CLUES

1. Within the borders of "Rectangular," I work with difficulty (5)
2. Root for start of game in southern England (7)
3. Omit part of the lid erroneously (5)
4. Considered Eddie Albert in a different light (11)
5. Revoked record permit involving this transmitter? (11)
6. Recalled one-time scene (5)
7. Runs around pro competitor (5)
8. "To need a lawyer is," I call, "almost lazy" (13)
9. Chicken fighting in a tree, breaking pottery (11)
10. Spanish steamship maintaining right course in animation (13)
11. One taken by different name for a cow (5)
12. Engineer errs about ICBM's first part of flight (5)
13. Have dinner after movie king feels better (7) (*two words*)
14. Writing hot disc, record rap hit (9)
15. Mock terror's locale! (13) (*two words*)
16. Endlessly try to consume snack (5)
17. A singer's put off some big stars (11)
18. Effort wore beagles out (11) (*two words*)
19. Musical combos established in groups (7)
20. Door hung crookedly on back of dwelling for beast (9)
21. Live in bird land (5)
22. I'm filling articles with soul (5)
23. Most dependable sign of oxidation I found in experiment (9)
24. Ada grabs Irma in flight (7)
25. Funny, coy mice with their tails cut off (5)
26. Gossip lodger heard (5)
27. Wipe out dirty ear next time (11)
28. Damned doctor, lawyer, editor (7)
29. Valentine's Day offering I shortened: "One from the heart" (7)
30. Instant cleaner to use on pans (11)
31. Underprivileged bum dated GI owning blue truck (13)
32. French painter finished framing a vicar's face (5)
33. Some housewives plan a demonstrative walk (9)
34. Fruit soft and fat (5)
35. Project to relax a pet cuckoo (11)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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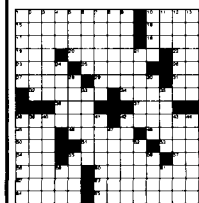
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WORD WATCH

BY ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

fifth disease *noun*, an illness common chiefly among children aged 5–14, caused by parvovirus B19 and lasting one to three weeks, characterized by a lacy, fiery red, migratory facial rash, minor gastrointestinal or respiratory symptoms, and sometimes joint pain. Also called technically *erythema infectiosum* and nontechnically *slapped cheek disease*. “Infectious disease problems investigated . . . during the 1980’s included the transmission of salmonellosis from chickens to eggs, the spread of Lyme disease, . . . the causal role of parvovirus in *Fifth disease*, and the resurgence of sexually transmitted disease through sex-for-drugs activities” (*Public Health Report 1990*).

BACKGROUND: Many years ago this disease acquired two names. Its causative agent, however, was not discovered until 94 years after the disease had been identified. In 1889 the name *erythema infectiosum* was given to the disease by G. Sticker in an article titled “Die neue Kinderseuche in der Umgebung von Giessen (*Erythema infectiosum*).” Six years later a French doctor, L. Cheinisee, coined the term *cinquième maladie éruptive* (*fifth rash disease*, later shortened to *fifth disease*). The choice of the name was influenced by the existence of four other major childhood diseases then regarded as clinically and epidemiologically distinct: scarlet fever (*first disease*), rubeola (measles, or

Here are a few of the words being tracked by the editors of The American Heritage Dictionary, published by Houghton Mifflin. A new word that exhibits sustained use may eventually make its way into the dictionary. The information below represents the first stage of research, not the final product.

second disease), rubella (German measles, or *third disease*), and epidemic pseudoscarlatina (Dukes’ disease, or *fourth disease*). There is also a *sixth disease*, roseola. Though medical literature no longer uses the terms *first* through *fourth disease* or *sixth disease*, *fifth disease* has persisted in usage, no doubt in part because of the difficulty some people may have in remembering or pronouncing the other, Latinate name.

late decider *noun*, a college graduate who decides mid-career to become a schoolteacher: “*Late deciders* have forsaken a bevy of career paths for teaching. They are former attorneys and computer analysts, musicians and military officers” (*The Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: Only a few years ago people were leaving the profession of teaching by the thousands. Now it seems that many other people want to enter it. From 1985 to 1989 programs for career-switching college graduates certified 12,000 teachers. Although teachers’ salaries have risen by about \$4,400, in 1990 dollars, since 1979, money is usually not the deciding factor influencing career switches. Factors that do influence the *late decid-*

ers include concern about the quality of education, a desire to use one’s expertise and life experience to make a difference in the lives of children, and the challenge of attaining creativity in the classroom.

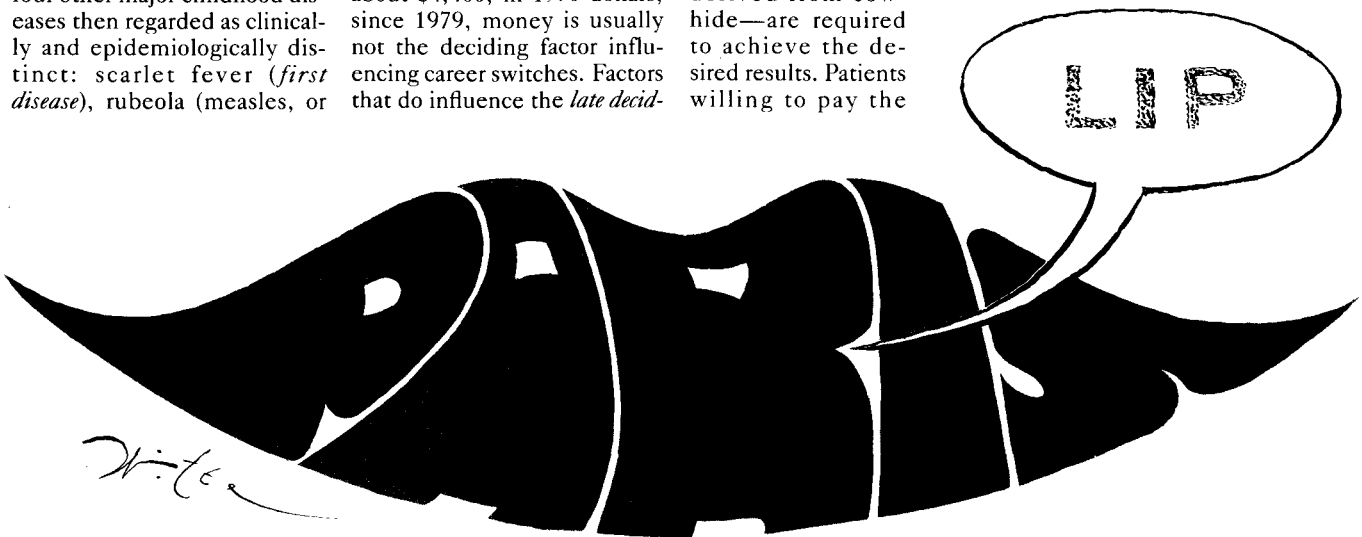
Paris lip *noun*, 1. a collagen-insertion procedure to define and enhance the Cupid’s bow of the top lip. 2. the pouty appearance so achieved. “Call it the *Paris Lip*. The newest pucker in fashion was introduced . . . with a roundup of movie-famous lips from 1920–1990—including Madonna’s” (*USA Today*).

BACKGROUND: The *Paris lip*, popular not only among models and actresses but also among teenagers and middle-agers seeking a sexy look, was developed by a French plastic surgeon. The procedure became available in the United States early this year. The *Los Angeles Times* says that “plastic surgeons . . . are reporting two and three times the requests for ‘*lip service*’” that they did two years ago. At least 16 injections of collagen—a protein derived from cowhide—are required to achieve the desired results. Patients willing to pay the

\$700–\$1,000 fee should remember that the procedure is painful and the results only temporary.

pizza-cutter’s palsy *noun*, a weakness of the hand muscles caused by pressing the handle of a roller-blade pizza cutter into the palm during repeated slicing: “Sprout-picker’s thumb, telegraphist’s cramp and *pizza-cutter’s palsy*—popular names for occupational afflictions that span the centuries and take in ways of living from the rustic to the cosmopolitan” (*Financial Times*).

BACKGROUND: This term, for which we have five citations, goes back at least to 1988, when H. Royden Jones, Jr., M.D., used it in a letter to *The New England Journal of Medicine* to describe a case of work-related motor dysfunction resulting from undue pressure on the ulnar nerve. He had seen it in a patient whose hand had become so weakened that the man had difficulty inserting his car key into the ignition lock. (The cure is simple: use another type of cutting instrument.) According to the *London Financial Times*, the terms *Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)* and *work-related upper limb disorders* are the preferred descriptors of such maladies.



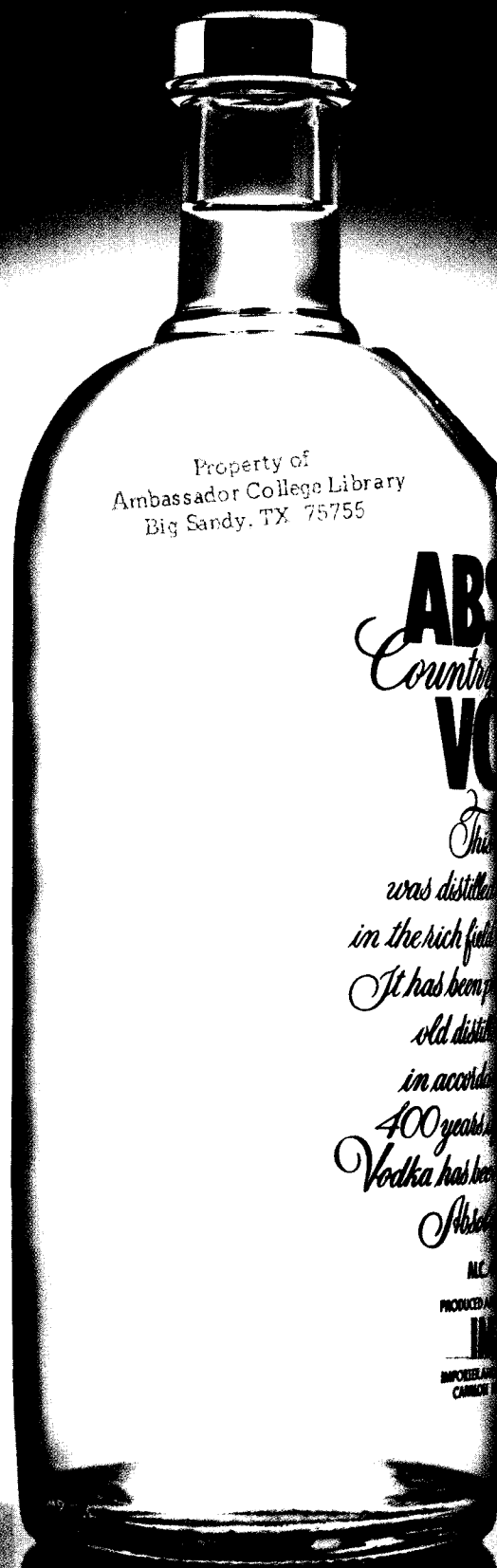


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